TOMORROW'S WORLD OF ILLUSTRATED ADULT FANTASY!

1984

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EXPLOSIVE FIRST ISSUE SPECIAL



RETAILERS: See page 83 for Display Allowance Plan.

REMEMBER THE GOOD OLD DAYS? WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THEY'D RETURN... IN 1984?

Remember the good old days, when you actually looked forward to sneaking away to read the comics?

Remember how it felt to dive into the surrealistic world of Buck Rogers, Flash Gordon and The Shadow? Ah, therein lay true adventure. It was a form of near-sexual ecstacy; a reverie, innocent and untainted by the problems of everyday life. It was a cerebral junk food high, before the terms cerebral, junk food and high became cliches of modern usage.

But then something happened. To the comics. And to us. Suddenly, Flash Gordon spoke of relevance. And the omnipotent Shadow withered under the problems of normal men. Our children grew up overnight, pushing hard to be given adult realities in the playgrounds of their nursery school world. And the comics virtually disappeared, rendered extinct by relevant four-color melodramas that had arisen and laid waste to their once-wonderous lands.

We remember those days. All too well. And we mourn for Buck Rogers, the Shadow and their cohorts. But theirs is a time long-since gone. And there is no way to recapture what once was.

We grew, too. At least most of us did. And maybe we became a little too old for our childhood heroes. Our goals changed. We became aware of different needs. And through it all, the world seemed to change even faster.

Yet, despite everything, we never lost our urge to escape. More than ever we needed those lost, adventurous worlds. But there simply seemed fewer and fewer of them around.

We, at 1984, are trying to recapture some of the fun of old. We've taken a dash of adventure, a smidgeon of excitement from the golden years of our youth, and mixed it with a healthy dose of relevant irreverence of the day. We've tried to recapture the spirit of a time that didn't take itself as seriously, and mix it with healthy adult speculation of tomorrow.

We've bundled it all in art by the finest craftsmen around. And tied it neatly with the Warren label.

We think the mix is an intelligent and satisfying blend. One that puts the fun back into the funnies.

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ISSUE NUMBER ONE
JUNE 1978

4 **LAST OF THE GREAT JOY JUICE** The Chinese started it. They zapped us with sterilization bombs. And American men wailed as their masculine attributes withered away. But we showed them commie rats. We got them in the end!

16 **SAGA OF HONEYDEW MELONS** The professor had a wonderful machine. It looked exactly like a man. But the sex-starved miners didn't need another man. So the professor made an adjustment. And it drove the miners insane!

24 **ONCE UPON CLARISSA** Poor Clarissa. So clumsy. First there was the accident with the runaway trains. Then the mishap with the drunken surgeon's blade. Soon, there wasn't much anyone could do . . . but stick Clarissa in little jars!

32 **QUICK CUT** A thousand-thousand years had passed since mankind had bathed itself in the numbing fire-rains. There was no radiation. No ill-effects. Society was still split into two irascibly distinct groups. The Halves. And the Half-nots!

38 **THE SAGA OF XATZ AND XOTZ** They came. From infinite corners of the universe. And landed amidst the rubble of a freshly dead world. Why, they wondered, was this fertile land destroyed? Then they found the answer!

39 **BUGS** So there we were. Cruising the backroads of the stars. In Earth's first intergalactic probe. Then we saw them. Three unidentified craft. All with their hatches opened to greet us. And rows of glistening metal teeth waiting eagerly within!

43 **MUTANT WORLD** Dimento was hungry. But then, so was every other survivor of the world-wide industrial holocaust. And there simply was no remaining food. None, that is . . . save for that scrumptious-looking girl, strolling down the lane!

51 **FASTER THAN LIGHT** It was all very scientific, really. Professor Elias Newton Zong had simply perfected the art of faster-than-light travel. How, you may well ask? He merely built a better, though more compact wheel!

63 **ANGEL** She was just a baby when they dropped the bombs. But she was safe. Protected from the savage outside world by the holy men in the monastery. As they raised her, they taught her everything. Things you wouldn't expect holy men to know!

75 **MOMMA CAN YOU HEAR ME?** His name was Cole Steel. Half of him was man. The other half, machine. Once, years ago, he had been dully normal. That was before the night the Altarian slime beast had half of him for dinner!

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LOOK **ALIVE,** YA WAD A'DRIED-UP JIZZUM.

THERE'S A COMMIE **WARSHIP** CHASING THIS FLOATING JUNKYARD!

U.S.S. SOW

LAST OF THE REALLY GREAT, ALL-AMERICAN JOY JUICE

COMMIES? WHY THEY AFTER US? THIS IS A SPACE JUNKER... A DEBRIS COLLECTOR! WE AIN'T NO WARRIN' VESSEL!

IF MY GUESS IS RIGHT, THEY'VE GOTTEN WIND OF OUR SECRET CARGO!

YOU MEAN THAT STOREROOM FULL'A 'VAPORATED SAUERKRAUT JUICE WE'RE CARTIN' T' THE DUMPS?

WHY IN'NA HELL WOULD THEY CHASE US ALL THE WAY OUT HERE FOR THAT?

MAYBE THEY'RE THIRSTY... WHO KNOWS!?

STOP ASKING FOOLISH QUESTIONS, SPUNKY, AND ARM THE BLASTERS!

UNLESS WE MOVE OUR DEAD ENDS WE'RE GOING TO BE JUST TWO MORE NAMELESS CASUALTIES IN EARTH'S FINAL WAR!

W-WAR!?

HOLD IT A GODDAMN MINUTE, YA PECKERLESS EXCUSE FER A MAN!

I DON'T KNOW NOTHIN' 'BOUT NO WAR!

THAT'S BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T WANT YOU TO KNOW!

BUT... I GUESS THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN KEEP IT FROM YOU WITH THOSE STARFIGHTERS BEATING DOWN OUR ASS!

SO COME ON, SPUNKY... MAN THAT CANNON AND DEFEND YOURSELF!

JEEZUS, JOHNNY! YOU AIN'T SHITTIN'! THEY'S OUT FER *BLOOD!*

BDDA-BDDA-BDDA-BAKK

BDDDM!

PAKKA-PAKKA

BUT THEY AIN'T GONNA GIT NONE'A THAT B'LONGIN' T'CAPTAIN *SPUNKY BOLT!*

ATTAWAY, SPUNKO!

BDOOM

PAKKA-PAKKA-PAKKA-

LAWD! LOOKIT 'EM ALL! THAT MUST BE A *HELLAVA* WAR BREWIN' BACK HOME!

OH, IT IS, SPUNKY! IT *IS!*

BDOOO!

PAKK-PAKKA

WHO TH'HELL WE *FIGHTIN'* BOY...THE *CHINKS* OR THE *RUSKIES?*

LAST I HEARD IT WAS US AGAINST THE *SQUINTS!*

BUT THOSE DON'T LOOK MUCH LIKE SLANTS *OUT THERE!*

CHKKA-CHKKA-CHKKA

OH LAWD, JOHNNY THEY'S... *WIMMEN!*

W-WE'RE AT WAR WITH *WIMMEN?*

WHAT TH' HELL KINDA WAR *IS* THIS?

BAKKA

BAKKA-BAKKA

IF IT'S COME TO THIS, YOU CAN BET YOUR ASS IT'S THE *LAST* ONE.

BDOOOOOO!

IF WE'RE FIGHTING THE FAIRER SEX, IT MUST MEAN THERE ARE NO *MEN* LEFT TO FIGHT!

BAKKA-BAKKA-BAKKA

YOU BETTER START *'SPLAININ'*, JOHNNY BOY! IF AH'M GONNA GET M' PECKER SHOT OFF... AH WANNA AT LEAST KNOW THE REASON *WHY!*

I DON'T KNOW HOW IT CAME TO *THIS*, SPUNK! BUT IT STARTED WHEN THE REDS LAUNCHED THEIR *STERILIZATION NUKES* STRAIGHT INTO THE HEART OF AMERICA!

WHADOOOM!

WITHIN A WEEK, THE ENTIRE MALE POPULATION OF THE U.S.A. *WAS DRIER* THAN A USED-UP NYMPH!

A WEEK AFTER THE COUNTRY'S SPERM COUNT DIPPED BELOW ZERO, THERE WAS A CRY HEARD NATIONWIDE...! EVERY *BAZONG* IN THE COUNTRY *WITHERED* AND *DROPPED!*

THE REDS FIGURED TO IMMOBILIZE OUR MANPOWER BY SIMPLE, EFFECTIVE *CASTRATION.*

BUT THEIR PLAN WORKED *TOO WELL!* THE IMPOTENT LITTLE NIP WHO DEVISED THE NUKES, FIGURING THEY MIGHT NOT BE POTENT *ENOUGH*, ADDED AN EXTRA SQUIRT OF HIS STERILIZATION SAUCE TO EVERY WARHEAD!

A MONTH AFTER THEY HIT, EVERY MAN IN AMERICA AWOKE TO FIND WHAT WAS LEFT OF HIS LOWER EXTREMITIES AS *SHRIVELED* AS A *DEHYDRATED PRUNE!*

I'LL BE DAMNED, JOHNNY! THEN YOU *LIED* T'ME 'BOUT BEIN' MOLESTED BY A MADWOMAN WITH A MEAT AXE!

I STILL DON'T SEE WHAT ALL THAT'S GOT T'DO WITH THEM COMMIE *WIMMEN* OUT THERE!

LIKE I SAID, SPUNK... THEY MIGHT BE AFTER OUR *CARGO!*

PAKKA-PAKKA-PAKK!

SAUERKRAUT JUICE!

*WELLLL...*IT ISN'T *EXACTLY* SAUERKRAUT JUICE!

DANG IT ALL, BOY! WHAT TH'HELL *IS* IT THEN?

PAKK-AKK-AKKA!

Y'SEE, OLD MAN, JUST AFTER THE *'CRISIS,'* THERE WAS WHAT YOU MIGHT CALL A *RUN* ON THE *SPERM BANKS!*

THEY, OF COURSE, BEING THE SOLE REMAINING *HOPE* OF THE LATE, GREAT AMERICAN WAY!

THE FORESIGHTED WOMEN RUNNING THE COUNTRY REALIZED EARTH MIGHT BE IN A TURMOIL FOR AWHILE YET... SO THEY *LOOTED* THE NATION'S *SPERM BANKS* AND SENT *ME* INTO SPACE WITH THE GOODS...

...TO *PROTECT* WHAT WAS LEFT OF OUR COUNTRY'S MOST *PRECIOUS* RESOURCE!

AND THAT, OLD MAN, IS WHEN MY JAP-BUILT FREIGHTER *BROKE DOWN*, AND *YOU* COLLECTED US LIKE SO MUCH SPACE DEBRIS!

Y-YOU *MEAN* THAT SAUERKRAUT JUICE *IS...?!*

WHATOOOM!

YOU'VE *GOT* IT, SPUNKY!

AND THOSE COMMIE WOMEN ARE *AFTER* IT!

'BOUT **TIME** YOU CAME TO, OLD MAN!

OH GOD... AH DONE **DIED** AN WENT T' **HELL!**

WE WAS JUST **INSPECTIN'** OUR **BOOTY!**

THAT AIN'T NO **BOOTY,** LADY...THAT'S MAH **PERSON!**

AN' AH SUGGEST YOU LEAVE IT **BE** OR I'LL **WRING** YER SCRAWNY COMMIE NECK!

COMMIES? OH, YOU FUNNY MAN! WE'RE NOT **COMMIES!** THERE AIN'T NO COMMIES **LEFT!**

WE DONE **BLASTED** THEM WITH OUR **APATHY BOMBS** AND THEY AIN'T A' ONE 'A THEM WHAT AIN'T GOT HIS **BRAINS** LEAKIN' OUTTA HIS EARS!

WE'RE ON **YOUR** SIDE, L'IL DAHLIN'...! WE'S JUST YO' TYPICAL **LOVE-STARVED** 'MERICAN FEMALES.

AN' WE'VE COME T' TAKE YOU **'WAY** FROM ALL THIS! **HEH! HEH! HEH!**

LOOK, GIRLS... ISN'T IT **CUTE!**

OH LAWD!

WE CAME HERE 'SPECTIN' T' FIND A FLOATIN' **SPERM BANK!** 'STEAD WE GET YOU... THE **REAL THING!**

I GET **FIRST** DIBSIES!

YA BUCK-TOOTHED JIZZUM-EATERS! TOUCH ME AN' YA **DIE!**

HA! HA! YOU DON'T LIKE THE WAY WE **LOOK,** OLDMAN?

WHAD'YA **EXPECK** WIMMEN T'LOOK LIKE WHO'VE BEEN 'SPOSED T'ALL THEM STERILE AN' APATHY GASSES FLOATIN AN' MIXIN' ROUND TH' ATMOSPHERE TILL THEY FORMED A CONCOCTION ALL THEIR OWN!?

WE MAY NOT BE AS **IG'NRANT** AS THEM ORIENTAL BEAUTIES...

... NOR AS **STERILE** AS OUR OWN 'MERICAN MEN... WHO WITH TH'GRACE A GOD AND A **ROLLER SKATE** ARE DOWN THERE BURYIN' THE HALVES 'A THEMSELVES WHAT WITHERED AWAY!

BUT WE GOT **NEEDS** THAT NEED TENDIN', OLD MAN...! AN' WHETHER YOU DONE RESOLVED YO'SELF TO IT OR NOT...

...YOU GONNA BE THE BRAND NEW **FATHER'A** OUR COUNTRY!

NO...! **NOOO!**

YOU DON'T HAFTA BE **BASHFUL,** LOVER! YOU JUST LET OL' **JUICY LUCY** TEND TO YOUR EVERY NEED!

YEAH, YA LUSCIOUS HUNK 'A MANHOOD...! HOW 'BOUT A BIG FAT **KISS** FO' OL' **FAY TH' LAY!**

LEMME **LONE,** GODDAMN IT! IT'S **IMPOTENT** I TELL YA!

IT DON'T **WORK** NO'MORE!

I GOT VOWS'A **CEL'BACY** T'ADHERE TO!

C'MON NOW, GRANPAW... YOU JUST BEING **COY!**

TAINT NO TIME T'BE **SHY!**

WE GONNA BE **FRIENDS!**

GOOD FRIENDS!

WHY ME, LAWD? WHY **ME?**

OH LOOKY, FAY WE'S GETTIN' **RESULTS** ALREADY!

GIT YO' SLIMY HANDS **OFF'N** THAT, WOMAN!

IT'S **MINE!**

AN' I AINT **'BOUT** T'GIVE IT T'NO SCUZ-BOXED DEGENERATE!

OH **GOODY**, FAY! HE'S PLAYIN' **HARD T'GET!**

NAW HE AIN'T, LUCE! HE'S ONE'A THEM **S AN' M** FREAKS!

ÜRK!

KINKY, Y'KNOW!

OH JOY! **PAIN! PAIN!**

GIT **OFF'N** ME, YA POONTANG-PUSHIN' PREVERT!

HEAVEN! **MMMMMM!**

HOW MANY TIMES AH GOTTA **TELL** YA...?

... AIN'T...

AH...

...NO...

...**SEX**...

...**OBJECK!**

WHOKT!

HOKKT!

THAPT!

AN' **YOU...!** WHY DIDN'TCHA **TELL** ME THIS WAS GOIN' ON BACK ON EARTH?

I KNEW THINGS WERE **BAD**, BUT **THIS...! LORD!**

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO **NOW**, SPUNKY? THEY'VE **OVERRUN** OUR SHIP!

IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE THEY **RECAPTURE** US!

LOOKS LIKE THERE'S ONLY **ONE** THING **TO** DO, BOY...!

...GIT T'THAT LOAD'A FREEZE DRIED **JOY JUICE...**

HAH!

...AN' KEEP IT **OUTTA** TH' HANDS A'THESE RUTTIN' WHIP-EATERS!

URK!

WAYAH FIGGERS IT... THE LATE GREAT 'MERICAN WAY IS BEST LEFT T'THE REMEMBRANCES **A'HISTORY** THAN T'THE FATE **THESE** CRAB-PLUCKERS GOT IN STORE FOR IT!

ONCE THEY USE THAT KICKAPOO JOY JUICE T' **BLOAT** THEYSELVES WITH **YOUNGUNS**...THEY AIN'T NO TELLIN' **WHAT** KIND'A 'BOMINATIONS THEY'LL BIRTH!

I **HEAR** WHAT YOU'RE SAYING, SPUNKY...

...AND I'M **WITH** YOU ALL THE WAY!

BUT I'VE GOT THIS NAGGING FEELING IT'S NOT GOING TO BE **EASY** GETTING TO THAT STOREROOM!

BIAT! PZAPP!

SHEEEEEIT! EASIER'N EATIN' PICKLED POSSUM GIZZARDS, BOY!

PTANG!

TWAK!

LOOKIT **THAT!** IT'S AS OPEN AS VIRGIN HAIRPIE!

GANGG!

PTANG!

W-WATCH OUT, SPUNKY! WE'VE GOT COMPANY!

UHMPPH! DAMMIT ALL! I KNEW IT WAS JUST TOO EASY!

ON YER FEET, YA SIPH-LICKIN' FAGS!

WE SHOULDDA KNOW'D YOU'D BE TRYIN' SOMETHIN' FUNNY WHEN YA SPURNED TH' AFFECTIONS 'A OUR MOST BEAUT'FUL GALS!

BEAUT'FUL MAH ASS! THEY'S WARTHOGS!

UGGH!

JOHNNY! GIT TH' DOOR! WE DON'T WANT NO MORE'A THESE 'LOVELIES' JOHNIN' US!

NOW, LOVER DOLL...! YOU CAME HERE T' CLAIM OUR BANANA PUDDIN'...

...AN' Y'KIN HAVE IT! WITH MAH COMPLIMENTS... JUST AS SOONS I MAKE ONE MINOR MODIFICATION!

N-NO! NOOOOO!

THAK!

PTANG

Y'SEE, THE WAY AH FIGGERS... Y'WANNA START TH' WORLD ALL OVER AGAIN USIN' THIS HERE MILK 'A HUMAN KINDNESS...!

WELL... AH SAY **FINE'N DANDY** TTHAT!

SPAK KT!!

BUT LET'S HAVE NO MORE **BLACKS!** NO MO' **WHITES!** NO MO' **CHINESE, HISPANIC** OR **INDIAN!**

LES JUST **JUMBLE** 'EM ALL **T'GETHER!**

AN MAYBE... JUST **MAYBE** WE WON'T HAVE A'WORLD WHAT'LL **DESTROY** ITSELF AGAIN OVER PETTY **DIFFERENCES!**

'COURSE WITH **YOU** AS THE MOMMA... AN' THIS **MULLIGAN** SLUSH AS OL' PAW... TH' HUMAN RACE MIGHT NOT COME OUT AS **PURTY** AS ME AN' JOHNNY HERE...!

N-NOOO!

BUT FACT IS, LADY... IT'S GOTTA HELL 'AVA BETTER CHANCE AT **SURVIVIN'!**

NOW IF YOU DON'T MIND...

...WE'RE GONE' TAKE OUR **LEAVE** A'THE **'HUMAN RACE!'**

OH, 'SCUSE ME, LADIES...! AH DIDN'T RE'LIZE TH'**LINE** WAS ALREADY STARTIN' T' FORM!

YOU BEST HURRY ON **IN** AN' GIT **YOURS** WHILE IT'S STILL THERE T'BE **GOT!**

AH'M TOLD THAT OL' KICKAPOO JUICE **DRIES-UP** FASTER 'N FREE CORN LIQUOR AT A REDNECK ORGY!

WELL, JOHNNY BOY... LOOKS LIKE M'GARBAGE CARTIN' DAYS IS ***OVER!***

AH CAIN'T SEE TH' SENSE IN ***HAULIN' TRASH*** WHEN TH' WORLD'S WALLOWIN' KNEE-DEEP IN STEAMIN' ***HOG SHIT!***

SIDES... THEY WOULDN'T BE MUCH OF A ***WELCOME*** FOR US BACK ON EARTH ANYWAY!

LOOKS LIKE IT'S JUST ***YOU'N ME*** AN' THE WIDE OPEN SPACES, JOHNNY!

BY THE WAY... I EVER TELL YA WHAT PURTY ***EYES*** YOU HAVE?

THE SAGA OF HONEYDEW MELONS

THERE THEY WERE. THE ***DREGS*** OF THE UNIVERSE. LOUD. ROUDY. CLAMORING FOR PHYSICAL PLEASURES THAT WERE ALL BUT ***NON-EXISTENT*** IN THE HARSH BUT RICH ASTEROID BELT. THEY WERE ***MINERS*** TO THE LAST MAN. LURED TOGETHER BY THEIR MUTUAL LUST FOR... ***WEALTH!***

HERE AT THE ***VACUUM PUMP,*** THE SOLE NIGHT SPOT AND WATERING HOLE, THEY SOUGHT ***REFUGE*** FROM THEIR DREARY, DRUDGERY-FILLED LIVES.

IT WAS HERE THAT THE LEGEND OF ***HONEYDEW MELONS*** WAS BIRTHED... THAT TERRIBLE NIGHT SOME TEN YEARS PAST. THEY STILL SPEAK IN WHISPERS OF THE HORRORS SEEN THEN. OF ***HONEY.*** AND ***EDDIE.*** AND ***MAXWELL*** THE DAMNED.

HUZZA! HUZZA! WHERE ARE DA ***GOILS!***

HURRY IT UP... B'FORE ***BIG EDDIE*** GETS HERE!

WE WANT DA ***BROADIES!***

LET'S SEE SOME ***PULCHRITUDITY!***

MAXWELL BYDERBECK WAS THE MOST ***DESPISED*** TRADER IN THE SPACEWAYS, THEN. A PROVIDER OF THE FORBIDDEN, A PROCURER OF THE ILLEGAL AND THE IMMORAL... HE WAS, NONETHELESS, A MAN OF ***PRINCIPLE.***

YOU KNOW MY ***PRINCIPLE,*** WOMBLE... IF YOU WANT IT, I'LL ***GET*** IT!

YOU ***GOT 'EM,*** MAX! ***RIGHT?*** YOU GOT 'EM!?

I'M YOUR ***PARTNER,*** MAX! THEY'LL KILL ***ME*** ALONG ***WITH*** YOU IF YOU ***DON'T*** GOT 'EM.

RELAX, WOMBLE, JUST ANNOUNCE THE SHOW EVERYTHING'LL BE ALRIGHT! I ***SWEAR!***

Author: NICOLA CUTI/Illustrator: ESTEBAN MAROTO

I HOPE THE GIRLS IN THIS BATCH ARE *TOUGH*, MAX. YOU REMEMBER THAT *TWENTY YEAR OLD* YOU SENT ME *LAST WEEK*?

YEAH.

THAT'S *HER!*

WHEH! BIG EDDIE WEARS 'EM OUT *QUICK*, DON'T HE?

I THANK YOU FOR YOUR *PATIENCE*, GENTLEMEN.

YA-HOO!

NOW...FOR YOUR VIEWING PLEASURE... THE MOST *GORGEOUS* GIRLS IN THE *GALAXY!*

GALAXY GIRLS WON'T YOU COME OUT TONIGHT!

COME OUT TONIGHT!

COME OUT TONIGHT...!

OH, *LAWD!* DEY'S BOOT'FUL!

YAZOOOO!

DUH...TAKE IT *OFF!* TAKE IT *ALL OFF!*

SUDDENLY... FROM THE BACK OF THE ROOM, THERE WAS THE ROAR OF THUNDER. AND A BELLOW THAT SOUNDED LIKE THE MATING CALL OF A LOVE-STARVED *BULL APE.*

THE *SINGING* CEASED IN MID-THROAT. THE *CHEERS* STILLED AS IF FROZEN IN MID-AIR. ALL EYES TURNED AND RESTED TENSELY ON... *BIG EDDIE!*

E-EDDIE!

GASP!

NOOO!

HE NEVER SAID *MUCH*, THIS BRUTE OF A MAN. BUT WHEN HE SPOKE, HIS WORDS WERE WELL-CHOSEN. HIS MEANING INSTINCTIVELY CLEAR.

ME WANT GOIL.

YOU PRETTY!

YOU FOR BIG EDDIE!

NOT SO FAST, BIG FELLA. I'D LIKE TO KNOW MORE *ABOUT* YOU. WHAT ARE YOUR *HOBBIES?* YOUR FAVORITE *FILMS?* DO YOU LIKE TRAVEL?

TALK TOO MUCH. YOU *COME.*

GLAH!

THAT'S WHAT I LIKE. A MAN WHO COMES RIGHT TO THE POINT.

THE *REST* FOR *EVERYBODY!*

WOULD YOU COME HOME AND MEET MY *MOTHER,* AT LEAST?

YAHOO!

LET'S *GET* 'EM.

MINE! MINE!

BUT... AS WAS THE CASE *EVERY* TIME BIG EDDIE CLAIMED A GIRL... THE REMAINING MINERS WERE DOOMED TO *DISAPPOINTMENT!*

WHAT THE...? THEY *AIN'T REAL!*

THEY... THEY'S *HOLOGRAMS!*

WOMBLE'S *TRICKED* US.

LET'S *PULVERIZE* THE BUGGER!

YOU *CROOK!* ONLY THE *LEAD* GIRL WAS A GIRL. YOU USED *HOLOS...*

...3-D LIGHT IMAGES FOR THE *REST!*

I... I *HAD* TO WOMBLE! GIRLS IN THEIR RIGHT MINDS WOULDN'T COME *NEAR* THEM *MINERS... OR* THIS ASTEROID!

TELL YOU *WHAT...* I'LL ONLY CHARGE YOU HALF FOR THE HOLOS!

YOU WON'T *LIVE* LONG ENOUGH TO CHARGE ME *NOTHIN'!* GRAB A HELMET AN' HEAD FOR THE *DOOR!*

THERE THEY ARE!

MASH TH' MOTHERS!

GIT 'EM!

SLAM!

WHEW!= THAT WAS A CLOSE ONE, WASN'T IT, WOMBLE?

WOMBLE!?

OMIGOSH!... I SLAMMED THE DOOR ON HIM! HE'S...HE'S STILL IN THERE WITH THAT...MOB!

YOU DESERTER... I'LL GET YOU FOR THIS--! =OWWWWW!=

BAP! POW! OOF!

POOR WOMBLE! MY HEART BLEEDS FOR THE GUY! BUT TO INSURE I DON'T BLEED TOO MUCH...

...I'D BEST PUT A FEW MILLION MILES TWIXT ME AND THAT MOB!

ADIOS, VESTA!

SO THERE HE WAS. MAX. THE SOLE PROPRIETOR OF THE VACUUM PUMP! IN ABSENTIA! AND... WITHOUT THE PROPER FLOOR SHOW TO PLACATE THE HOT-TEMPERED MINERS, HE WAS DESTINED TO FOR-EVER REMAIN...ABSENT!

I'M NOT GONNA FIND ANY 'TALENT' HERE! THESE MARTIAN WOMEN ARE BUILT LIKE TREE STUMPS!

IT WAS THEN THAT UNKIND FATE, GRINNING DOWN ON MAX LIKE A HYENA IN A DEATH MASK, SENT HIM HIS UNDOING... IN THE GUISE OF A TWISTED LITTLE SCIENTIST!

EXCUSE ME, I UNDERSTAND YOU ARE NEWLY ARRIVED FROM VESTA.

YEAH? WHAT OF IT?

I AM PROFESSOR PALEVSKY AND THIS IS LX-3... THE MOST PERFECT ANDROID IN CREATION!

TH...THAT'S A ROBOT?

H-HE'S SO *LIFELIKE!*

PRECISELY. AND *HANDY*, TOO! HE CAN DO THE WORK OF *TWENTY* MINERS!

I'D LIKE TO TAKE HIM TO VESTA... TO SEE IF THE MINING COMPANIES CAN USE A DOZEN MORE *LIKE* HIM!

YOU KNOW PROFESSOR, IF YOU TAKE THAT ANDROID TO VESTA, THE MINERS WILL CUT *HIM*...*AND* YOU INTO *ITSY PIECES!*

THEY WON'T LIKE BEING *REPLACED*.. BY A *MACHINE!*

YOU MAY BE RIGHT, SIR... BUT WHAT DO YOU *SUGGEST?*

TELL YA WHAT, PROFESSOR...! MAYBE YOU CAN *REBUILD* LX-3, A LITTLE, Y'KNOW...!

NOW IF HE WERE JUST A LITTLE *SHORTER*... AND HAD A FEW *CURVES*--!

HMMMN! I THINK I SEE WHAT YOU *MEAN!*

WEEKS PASSED BEFORE IT WAS AGAIN *SHOWTIME* ON VESTA! A TIME FOR FEMALES OR *FISTICUFFS!*

I HOPE THIS *WORKS*, PROFESSOR! THEY LOOK EVEN *UGLIER* THAN BEFORE.

I SURE WISH *WOMBLE* WERE STILL AROUND T' TAKE THE BLA-! *HUHH!*

TO TAKE THE *WHAT*, YOU YELLOW-TAILED DESERTIN' CREEP? THE *BLAME* IF SOMETHING GOES *WRONG?*

WOMBLE? Y-YOU'RE *ALIVE!?*

NO THANKS TO *YOU!*

THOSE ROCK CHOMPERS MANGLED ME *GOOD.*

AND IT'S ONLY A *SAMPLE* OF WHAT THEY SAID THEY WAS GONNA DO WHEN THEY CATCH UP WITH *YOU!*

IN FACT I MIGHT EVEN *HELP* THEM.

LISTEN, WOMBLE! WE GOTTA FORGET BYGONES! I'VE GOT SOMETHING THAT'LL MAKE US *MILLIONS. REALLY!*

IT... IT'S THE *PERFECT FEMALE!* SHE CAN HANDLE *ANY* THUG OUT THERE! WHAT'S MORE, SHE'S A *BOMBSHELL!*

WHATTAYA *SAY?* GIMME A *BREAK* WILLYA, GUY? WE'LL BE *RICH!*

RICH, HUH? OKAY, MAX! ONE *LAST* CHANCE, BUT IF ANYTHING GOES WRONG--!

IT WON'T, WOMBLE I *PROMISE* YOU!

GENTLEMEN, *MAXWELL BYDERBECK* BRINGS YOU THAT HEAVENLY PHENOMENON... *HONEYDEW MELONS!*

YAZOOO!

WHOOPIE!

GOILS!

THE CURTAINS PARTED AND IT WAS AS IF *DAWN* HAD COME TO A LONG DREARY NIGHT. SHE WAS *SUNSHINE* AND *GOLDEN WINE.* SHE WAS *SENSUALITY* AND *SWEETNESS* BUT MOST OF ALL... SHE WAS THE *SEXIEST* DAMNED THING THOSE MINERS HAD EVER SEEN.

BRIAN HERETO

BUT BEFORE SHE COULD MAKE A MOVE, THERE WAS A FAMILIAR *BELLOW* FROM THE BACK OF THE ROOM.

ME WANT *GOIL!*

OH LORD!

NOT AGAIN!

I WISH HE'D LEARN SOME NEW WORDS.

SHE WAS LIKE A *GODDESS* TO HIM. FROM THE MOMENT BIG EDDIE LAID EYES ON HER... IT WAS AS THOUGH HE WERE HAVING A *RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.*

MMMMM! YOU *NICE!* WE HAVE *GOOD* TIME!

BUT CLEARLY, HONEYDEW WAS NOT THE *RELIGIOUS* TYPE...!

WOPP!

EDDIE WAS OVERPOWERED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS OVERBEARING LIFE. AT THAT PRECISE MOMENT, EVERY MINER PRESENT FELL KNEE-DEEP IN *LOVE* WITH *HONEYDEW* THE *UNTOUCHABLE!* SHE WAS FIRMLY ENPERCHED ON A PEDESTAL OF *LOVE!*

WHEN THE MUSIC FINALLY BEGAN... HONEYDEW'S AUDIENCE WAS *ENRAPTURED.*

THE MUSIC WAS THE KEY THE PROFESSOR HAD BUILT INTO HER. IT ACTIVATED A TRIGGER WHICH SET HER *MACHINERY* IN *MOTION.*

SHE WAS THE *ULTIMATE MACHINE.* A CLOCK WITH FLUID GEARS. A CAR ON A VELVET ROAD. A *BALLERINA* VESTING HERSELF OF *GARMENTS.*

WHEN SHE WAS THROUGH, SHE KNEW THEY WANTED *MORE..!*

THEY *SCREAMED* FOR IT. *SHOUTED.* THE CLUB THUNDERED WITH THE ROAR OF THREE HUNDRED FRUSTRATED MINERS! THE WALLS *VIBRATED* WITH A SEXUAL, *SENSUAL* RHYTHM ... THAT COMPELLED HONEYDEW TO GO *ON--!*

MY GOD! W... WHAT'S SHE'S *DOING?*

T-TURN HER *OFF!* PROFESSOR! *SHUT HER DOWN!!*

THEY CLAMORED FOR MORE... AND TO THEIR SUPRISE...

... THAT'S WHAT SHE *GAVE* THEM!

GOD DAMN HIM!

HE'S DONE IT *AGAIN!*

WOMBLE'S TRIED TO *TRICK* US!

I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU'D GIVE US JUST ONE *TEENSY* MORE CHANCE?

AFTER THE MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE OF *MAX, WOMBLE* AND THE *PROFESSOR*, THE CLUB JUST FELL APART. EVENTUALLY EVEN THE MINERS DESERTED VESTA...

AS FOR *HONEYDEW*, THE ANGEL OF THE ASTEROIDS..! WELL SHE'S STILL *THERE*...ON *THE STAGE* OF THE VACUUM PUMP!

AND AFTER ALL THIS TIME...

SPRONG!

... SHE'S STILL DOING HER *THING!*

My Dearest Ordway;
As always, I was overjoyed to the point of ecstacy, upon receipt of your latest correspondence. It is becoming ever more obvious to those around me that your letters are my sole reason for clinging to this time-wearied life.



My doctors are deeply thankful to you for sparking my renewed interest in living. Yet, they are concerned as well, fearful that I might again relapse into fits of suicidal depression should our romance abruptly end.



I too, beloved Ordway, share my physician's fears. In the six months we have exchanged letters, I have perhaps permitted myself to become too close... too fond of you. And although we have never met I share the sentiments expressed in your recent missive .. of love and deep intimate ties between us.



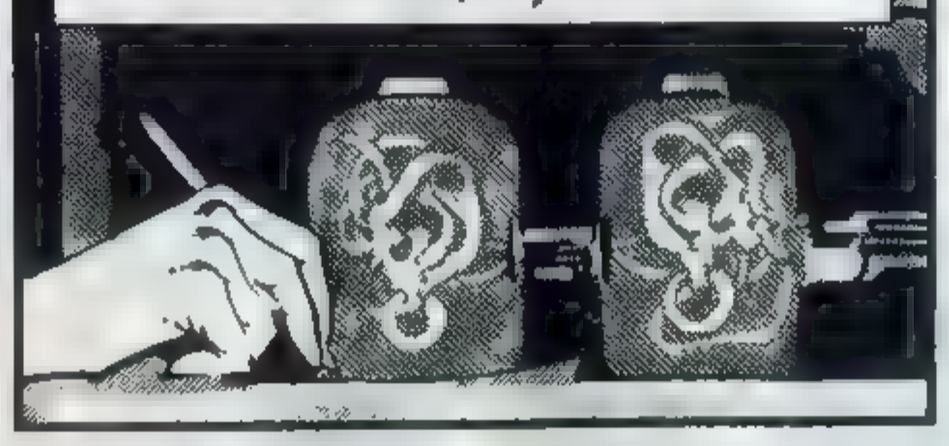
Yet, I fear that if you were to discover me for what I truly am, my beloved, you could scarce contain feelings of shock and revulsion... and sheer hatred.

And my heart would once again be crushed with loneliness.

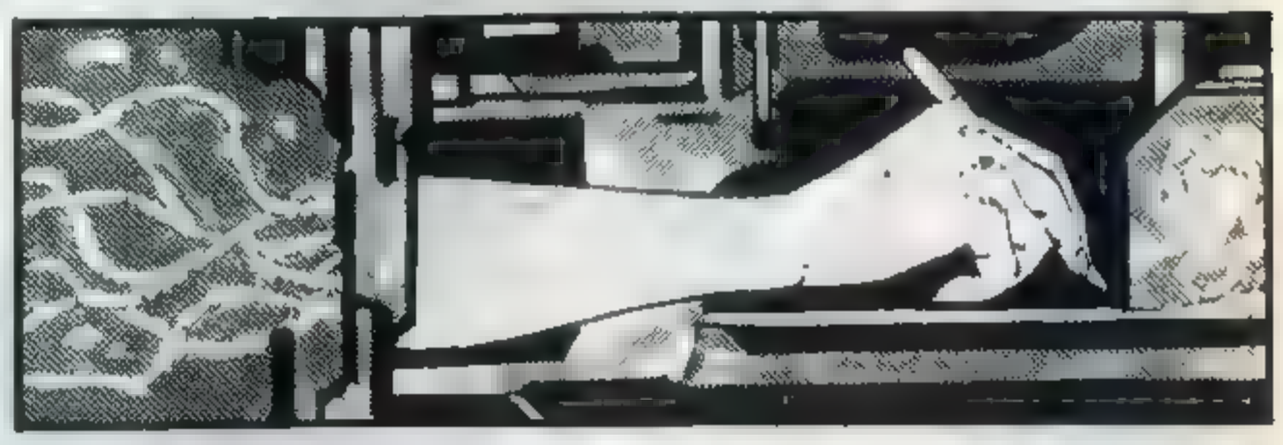
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Author: BILL DuBAY/Illustrator: ALEX NINO

ONCE UPON CLARISSA

And yet, any hurt I may incur would be *inadequate* punishment for the deceitful lies I have penned since our correspondence began.

I fear I have *misled* you, my sweet, innocent Orsway. I must tell you this now... while there is still time for you to cancel your impending visit..

... where undoubtedly you would have discovered the *horrible* truth for yourself.

I have deceived you to such a degree that I scarcely know where to *begin* my confessions of guilt.

Perhaps, as always, to start at the beginning will be best.

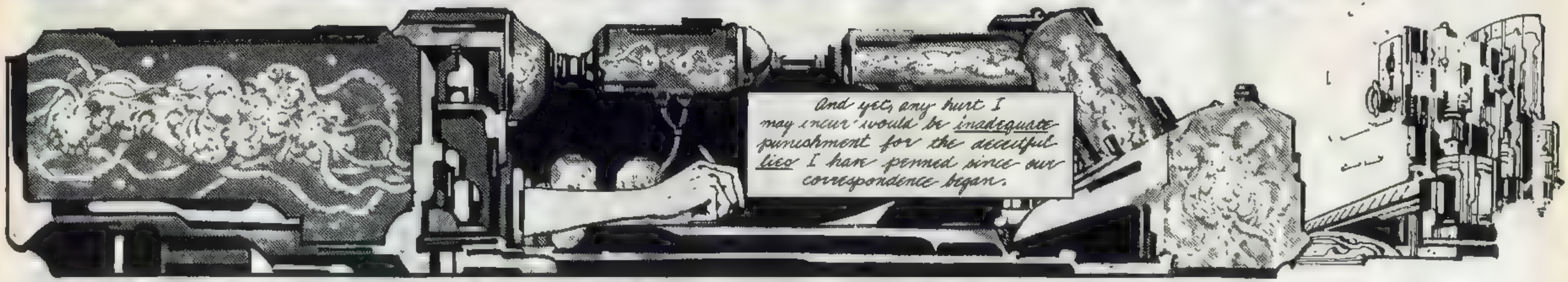
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It was truly a *moving account* of the accident that mangled my body beyond human recognition.

How I came to be trapped between those two runaway trains on an inevitable collision course, yet remains an unanswerable mystery to me.

Suffice it to say, the newspaper account was *incomplete* as published, my love. For even though it ends with a battalion of surgeons working desperately to piece together my mangled frame, there is an *epilogue* to my story far more inedible

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The doctors who labored so valiantly to save my life cannot be blamed for the events which followed, my love. My body was in such a state of disarray...

...it is easy to understand how they confused the duodenum with the rectal ducts. After all... the two do look so much alike.

The surgeons weren't aware of their mistake at first. They didn't catch it until one of the nurses found me in a catatonic daze doing futile headstands in the woman's lavatory.

By then however, it was too late. the damage to my digestive tract was so severe that I had to have an immediate transplant of pancreas, vena cava, suprarenal glands and hepatic veins.

My pylorus and bladder had to be hooked up to external machines which both fed and cleansed my body automatically.

Yet, even when all of the alterations had been completed on my patchquilt form, the strain of internal body functions such as common elimination were so severe, that stitches repairing rips and tears in my esophagus and lymphatic vessels began bursting and splitting at the seams.

My physicians' only course of action naturally, was to remove the damaged esophagal ducts from my body, and place them in an exterior region adjacent to my body proper, where they could remain functioning under total observation.

The problem of body strain persisted. Other seams began splitting open, and organs dangled loosely through ruptured openings.

The surgeons had no other alternative but to give up... abandon all hope of ever saving my mangled form.

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Preserving my life no matter what the cost became their primary objective. And to do that, they concluded, they had only to remove all functional body organs and reconnect them in a more advantageous though somewhat less compact manner.

My doctors replaced those parts that were worn or badly damaged with spare parts from generous donors... or with mechanical devices that function even better than the original.

An atomic powered pacemaker, for example, now rests in the approximate proximity once reserved for my heart. My epiglottis, pylorus and ureters are totally of teflon coated plastic. And I believe the scientists at Mattel had something to do with the replacement of my pectoralis.

What I am trying to tell you, my beloved Ordway, is that the photograph I sent you sometime back, is not truly a good likeness.

Somewhat outdated, it was actually taken the day before my fateful accident with the subways.

I felt that I owed you this explanation, my love, because of what we have come to mean to each other through our correspondence.

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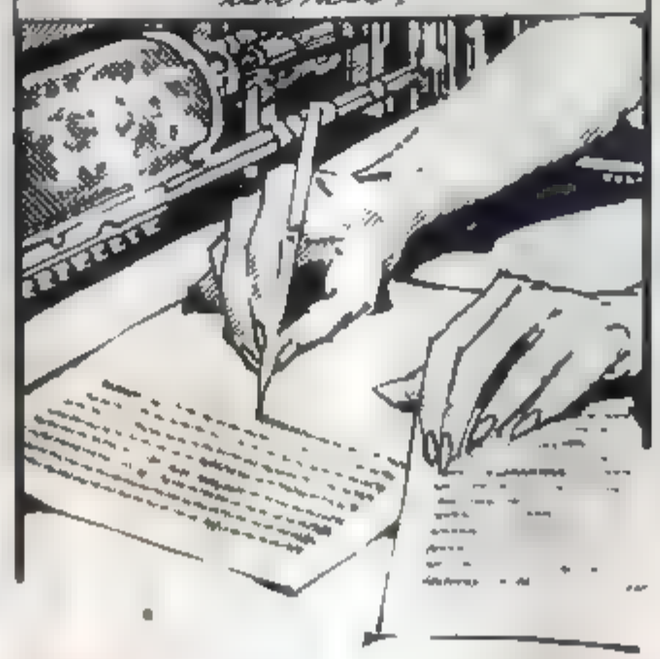
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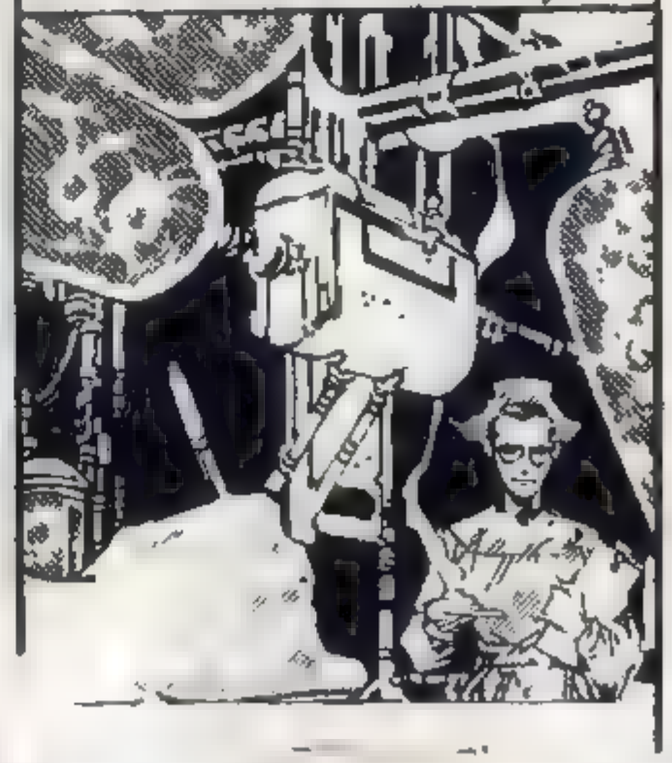
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To think I vainly allowed myself to dream, dear Ordway, of once again being held in the arms of a man... of being loved and giving love... and perhaps even carrying a new life within me...

... the life of a baby created through our mutual Love.

How could I have ever sheltered such foolish, impossible thoughts? A man embracing me? Ha! A man wouldn't know which jar... which tube to hug first.

And while each of my body parts are functional... operational, and my desires are the desires of a healthy, asexual female in her child-bearing prime... what man could find it in his heart to love a woman composed of disjointed plastic, wires and scrap human organs?

No! I could not be so selfish as to inflict that upon any man. I have been too selfish too long... allowing attentive physicians, brilliant surgeons and diligent nurses to flutter about me, catering to my every need.

You can only ask so much of Blue Cross.

I truly believe the time has come, my beloved Ordway, to end my self-serving existence upon this world. I have simply to remove one small electrical socket and the end will come gently peacefully for me.

I only want you to know, my beloved, that my final thoughts will be of you. I am sorry to have deceived you so. I truly love you for the kind, understanding and gentle man your letters show you to be!

If there is an afterlife, my dearest Ordway, you can be assured I will speak well of you there. Your kindness to me will never be forgotten.

Your friend and would-be lover, Clarissa.

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INFO

HER

SO! YOUR THE FAMOUS DON JUAN OF CLARISSA'S DREAMS! SHE'S TOLD **EVERYONE** HERE AT THE HOSPITAL OF YOUR ROMANTIC LETTERS!

R-R-ROMANTIC D-D-DON JUAN... **ME?**

CLARISSA WILL BE VERY GLAD TO SEE YOU! SHE DOES **SO** NEED THE COMPANIONSHIP OF SOMEONE OTHER THAN THE HOSPITAL STAFF.

TH... THEN C-C-CLARISSA'S NOT **D-D-D-DEAD?**

DEAD? FAR FROM IT, DEAR BOY! IN HER PRESENT STATE, SHE'S ONE OF THE **HEALTHIEST** WOMEN IN THE WORLD. WHY, WE CAN KEEP HER TICKING FOR ANOTHER HUNDRED YEARS! HELL... **TWO HUNDRED** IF WE HAVE TO!

B-BUT I-I-I TH-THOUGHT--!

DON'T TELL ME SHE PULLED THAT OLD **SUICIDE** ROUTINE ON YOU, TOO? **HA! HA!** SHE'S TRIED **THAT** BEFORE!

Y-YOU M-MEAN IT'S ALL A-A-A **F-FAKE?**

TRICKERY? CHICANERY? FOR **ATTENTION?** NO, NOT AT **ALL,** BOY! CLARISSA'S NOT LIKE **THAT!**

AT TIMES SHE BECOMES GENUINELY **DEPRESSED** OVER HER... LET'S CALL IT... HER CURRENT STATE OF PERPLEXITY.

IF NOT FOR THE FACT THAT WE KEEP **THE 'PLUG'** AND ALL OF HER VITAL PARTS OUT OF HER IMMEDIATE REACH, CLARISSA MIGHT EVENTUALLY BE **SUCCESSFUL** IN HER SUICIDE ATTEMPTS.

CLARISSA'S PART TOO

BUT H-HOW DO YOU D-DO TH-TH-TH-THAT?

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THE REST OF CLARISSA IS UP THERE IN HER OWN PRIVATE ROOM.

HER CONSTANT COMPANIONS ARE A BIG BROTHER TV CAMERA AND SOME OF THE FINEST LIFE SUSTAINING MACHINERY AVAILABLE... ALL FUNCTIONING AROUND THE CLOCK TO KEEP OUR CLARISSA HEALTHY AND HAPPY.

BUT ENOUGH OF THE TOUR! CLARISSA WILL WANT TO SEE YOU!

B-BUT I-I-I--!

DON'T BE SHY, MY BOY! SURELY YOU KNOW HOW CLARISSA FEELS ABOUT YOU.

COME ON! RIGHT THIS WAY!

CLARISSA! I HAVE A SURPRISE FOR YOU!

OH, DOCTOR... YOU... YOU'VE BROUGHT--?

IT'S YOUR BELOVED! IT'S ORDWAY! THE MAN YOU'VE TOLD US ALL SO MUCH ABOUT!

ORDWAY! ORDWAY?

ORDWAY... IS IT REALLY... YOU?

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OH, ORDWAY! REALLY? YOU'RE SO SWEET!

I-I THOUGHT FOR SURE YOU WOULD CANCEL YOUR TRIP AFTER MY AWFUL LETTER.

I-I'M SO SORRY FOR...FOR DECEIVING YOU SO! SOB!

I-I C-CAME BECAUSE I L-L-L- LOVE TH-THE R-REAL YOU!

I...I L-LOVE YOU, C-C-CLARISSA...N-NO M-MATTER WH-WH-WHAT YOU L-LOOK LIKE!

OH, ORDWAY... YOU MEAN YOU'LL MARRY ME?

WE CAN HAVE THE BABY I'VE ALWAYS WANTED!?

B-BEAUTY I-IS O-ONLY S-SKIN... ER... G-G-GLASS DEEP... I A-ALWAYS S-S-SAY!

OHHH! YOU'VE MADE ME SO HAPPY, MY BELOVED! I...I CAN HARDLY WAIT! A BABY OF MY VERY OWN!

WHY WAIT WHEN EVERY SECOND IS SO PRECIOUS FOR YOU TWO HAPPY LOVEBIRDS!

IT'LL TAKE THE PREACHER A WHILE TO GET HERE, ANYWAY! IN THE MEANTIME, YOU TWO CAN GET TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER!

OHHHH, DOCTOR, REALLY?

WHY NOT?

COME ON, MY BOY! THAT PART OF CLARISSA'S DOWNSTAIRS...

...IN A JAR MARKED V!

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QUICK CUT

IT HAD BEEN A THOUSAND-THOUSAND YEARS SINCE MAD-KIND HAD BATHED ITSELF IN THE PURGATORIAL ***FIRE RAINS.*** THE BITTER NECTAR OF RADIO-ACTIVITY HAD LONG-SINCE DISPERSED, LEAVING LITTLE OF THE ILL-EFFECTS LONG PREDICTED BY THE DOOMSDAY-FEARING ALARMISTS.

OH, IT WAS ADMITTED THAT SOME *MINOR* GENETIC DEFORMITIES MAY HAVE RESULTED FROM THE COUNTLESS PLUTONIUM IONS INDUCED INTO THE LUNGS WITH EACH CLOYING BREATH. THERE WAS EVEN THAT OBSTINATE MINORITY WHO SIMPLY ***REFUSED*** TO INHALE THE HOLOCAUSTIC TOXINS, AND HAD LONG SINCE GIVEN UP THE FINE ART OF BREATHING.

ASIDE FROM THIS OVERLY-PERSECUTED MINORITY, HOWEVER, CIVILIZATION SEEMED PRETTY MUCH THE SAME AS IT HAD BEEN IN THE TIME OF THE GREAT ***MAN-IACS.*** AS EVER, THE WORLD REMAINED DIVIDED INTO TWO DISTINCT GROUPS...THE ***HALVES*** AND THE *HALF-NOTS.* IT TOOK ROUGHLY ***TWO HALVES,*** STANDING ONE ON THE CRANIUM OF THE OTHER TO EQUAL THE SIZE OF THE MORE DOMINANT ***HALF-NOTS*** (WHO WERE STILL DIMINUTIVE WHEN COMPARED WITH THEIR PRE-ARMAGEDDONIC FOREBEARS).

THE LARGER MORE LECHEROUS ***HALF-NOTS*** BUILT THEIR CASTLES FROM RUINS FOUND IN THE LONG SINCE DESTROYED CITY-CENTERS. WHILE THE SMALLER, MORE PEACEFUL OVERLY-ENDOWED ***HALVES*** DWELT HAPPILY, THOUGH EVER ON THEIR ***GUARD*** IN THE GREAT ***FORESTS.***

ONE RESPECTED MEMBER OF THIS SMALL SOCIETY WAS ***ANDIF THE PRUDENT,*** WHOSE TITLE REPRESENTED NO MEAN ACHIEVEMENT AMONG THESE ELFISH FOLK WITH THE OVERSIZED GENITALIA

ANDIF'S CONSTANT COMPANION, ***TRIL,*** WAS A TINY BEAUTY WHO HAD SHOWN A MARKED PREFERENCE FOR HIM DURING THE LAST CARNAL TIME....

TRIL! ***LOOK!*** THERE'S A ***GIANT*** IN THE VILLAGE!

GENTLE PEOPLE! I HAVE COME FOR MY ***TRIBUTE!***

Author and Illustrator: WALLY WO

IT WAS THAT TIME OF MONTH AGAIN WHEN THE OVERSIZED BRUTES CAME TO THE FOREST CITIES TO EXTRACT THEIR 'PROTECTION TAXES'

I REQUIRE BUT A *HALF DOZEN* VESTAL VIRGINS THIS CYCLE!

WE AIN'T PAYIN'!

YER TAKIN' ALL OUR BEST *WIMMIN!*

SUCK WIND, SPURT BAG!

THOSE OF THE LARGER STRAIN HAD LITTLE USE FOR THE SMALLER *HALVES*... EXCEPT IN MATTERS OF A *CARNAL* NATURE! IT SEEMED THAT THE *FEMALES* WERE MORE TO THEIR LIKING THAN THE BRUTISH AMAZONS OF THEIR OWN SOCIETY.

ONCE EACH MONTH...ON *ECSTACY DAY*, THE HAVE NOTS SENT THEIR COLLECTOR FOR THE *TRIBUTE* THEY DESIRED OF THE LITTLE PEOPLE.

UNFORTUNATELY, SINCE NO FEMALE HAD EVER *RETURNED* AFTER BEING GIVEN OVER TO THE GIANTS, THAT PORTION OF THE SMALL FOLK REMAINED DANGEROUSLY NEAR *EXTINCTION*.

YOU WILL GIVE ME MY *DUE*... OR *ELSE*!

NOOOOOO!

THUNK!

M-MY *BABY*! OH GOD! MY *BABY*!

EEEEYAAA!

AND THE FIRST TIME THE HALVES *REFUSED* TO PAY THAT TRIBUTE...

TWO THINGS HAPPENED SIMULTANEOUSLY! THE GIANT TAX COLLECTOR *DISAPPEARED*... AND A DEADLY RAIN OF *ARROWS* SHOWERED THE NORMALLY PEACEFUL VILLAGE. THOSE WHO WERE ARMED TOOK THEIR TOLL ON THEIR HIDDEN ATTACKERS BEFORE THEY DIED...!

BUT IT WAS *OVER* IN MINUTES! AND NOT ONE OF THE SMALLER, GENTLE PEOPLE REMAINED *ALIVE!*

ANDIF AND TRIL, HIDDEN IN THE GRASS, ESCAPED THE SLAUGHTER...

...AND WATCHED AS AN ARMY OF OGRES EMERGED FROM THE TREES...!

THEY'RE GATHERING UP THE DEAD! BUT... BUT WHY? AND WHAT IS THAT TERRIBLE ODOR!

THEY'RE COOKING THEM!

SILENTLY, ANDIF ROSE AND BUCKLED ON HIS SWORD AND DAGGER...!

SO THAT'S WHY OUR FEMALES HAVE NEVER RETURNED! THE GIANTS ARE CANNIBALS! NO WONDER THEY'RE SO FAT AND HEALTHY!

ANDIF! WHAT WILL YOU DO?

OUR...OUR PEOPLE... ALL OF THEM... ARE GONE THEY MUST BE AVENGED I AM NO MATCH AGAINST THE OGRES! BUT I WILL MAKE THEIR TAX COLLECTOR PAY! I WILL FOLLOW HIM TO HIS DOMAIN WAIT UNTIL HE IS ALONE, AND THEN...!

OH, ANDIF... CAN I HELP?

NO! YOU'LL ONLY BE A PAIN IN THE ASS!

AND SO IT WAS SETTLED! ANDIF SET OUT, SATISFIED THAT HE HAD WON TRIL OVER TO HIS WAY OF THINKING, WHILE THE STRONG-WILLED GIRL FOLLOWED HIM DISCRETELY AT A DISTANCE!

ANDIF BEGAN TO SENSE DANGER ONLY AS HE NEARED THE GIANT CITY!

DIE, INFIDEL!

NO! NOOOOOO!

FOR THE FIRST DOZEN OR SO MILES, ANDIF NEVER SUSPECTED THAT HE WAS BEING SHADOWED. HIS THOUGHTS WERE TOTALLY OCCUPIED WITH HIS OWN IMPENDING HEROICS. THE LITTLE PEOPLE'S WORD FOR HEROICS BY THE WAY, WAS THE SAME AS FOR IDIOCY!

ANDIF! STOP! IT'S ME! TRIL!

I KNOW! I KNOW!

THEN, JUST AS HER SCREAMS SUBSIDED...!

LISTEN! SOMEONE'S COMING! QUICK! INTO THE BUSHES!

WH-WHO CAN IT BE?

I DON'T KNOW... AND WE'RE NOT WAITING TO FIND OUT! COME ON!

HEY! WHAT ABOUT MY CLOTHES?

AN ARMED BAND OF FIERCE, WARTY OGRES PASSED SO CLOSE TO OUR HIDDEN HEROES, THAT ANDIF COULD ALMOST REACH OUT AND TOUCH THEM!

I KNEW IT! OGRES!

SHH!

ANDIF...! FOR THE LAST TIME, I BEG YOU--!

IT HAD BETTER BE THE LAST TIME. I'M GOING AFTER THAT SCROTUM-SUCKING TAX MAN... AND I'M DOING IT ALONE!

MEANWHILE... NOT FAR AWAY A BEAUTIFUL THOUGH SOMEWHAT AMAZON-LIKE CAPTIVE WAS BEING LED TO THE VILE TAX COLLECTOR'S FORTRESS!

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THE HIDEOUS PALACE, BUILT OF BOTH HUMAN AND ANIMAL REMAINS, STOOD IN THE CENTER OF AN ANCIENT BURNED-OUT METROPOLIS. ARMED GUARDS LOITERED EVERYWHERE. TROLLS, OGRES, MUTES AND NORMS...! EACH A DIFFERENT SIZE, EACH A MORE TWISTED SHAPE THAN THE LAST. BUT ALL WERE MARKED BY A STRANGE, VACANT FEROCITY AND A TRULY MARVELOUS STUPIDITY. THE BRAVE GIRL OBSERVED IT ALL AS SHE WAS PUSHED ROUGHLY INTO THE GRISLY EDIFICE!

HERE'S THE **SNATCH BOX** YOU SENT ME FOR, SIR! GRANTED SHE'S NOT **MUCH**... BUT I JUST COULDN'T FIND MORE'A THAT **LITTLE** BEAVER-MEAT! I THINK WE BLEW THE LAST OF IT **AWAY!**

OH **DAMN!** I DO SO **HATE** THESE ELEPHANTINE COWS! HOWEVER... IF THAT'S ALL THERE **IS**—!

PUT HER OVER **THERE!** WE'LL JUST HAVE TO **TENDERIZE** HER BEFORE WE SERVE HER TO THE TROOPS!

AND... IN THE **BOG** OUTSIDE THE COLLECTOR'S CASTLE...

YOU'RE A **PAIN,** YOU KNOW THAT!? HOW CAN I **SNEAK UP** ON THAT CASTLE WITH **YOU**--!?

OH, **ANDIF**--! H-HELP I'M STUCK!

IT... IT'S **QUICKSLIME, ANDIF!** S-SAVE ME!

PLEASE!

DAMN! WHAT NEXT!

ANDIF! PLEASE!

I... I DON'T WANT TO **DIE!**

SHADDUP, WILL YA! JUST GRAB THIS **VINE!**

I **KNEW** IT! JUST **LIKE** A WOMAN...

...CAN'T **CATCH** WORTH **SHIT!**

- A SMALL PATROL OF OGRES WAS ATTRACTED BY TRIL'S FEEBLE CRIES! THEY FOUND **ANDIF** WAITING FOR THEM. CONSUMED WITH GRIEF... TOUCHED WITH THE MADNESS OF HIS LOSS, HE DID SOMETHING UNHEARD OF IN THE HISTORY OF HIS TINY RACE...!

OUT-NUMBERED BY HIS LARGER FOES, ANDIF STOOD HIS GROUND AND PREPARED TO **FIGHT!**

SORRY I INTERRUPTED YOUR **CIRCLE JERK,** GNAT NUTS...!

SPLATT!

...BUT HOW ELSE COULD I HAVE *GOTTEN* YOU TO GIVE ME THE KEY TO YOUR CASTLE?

MEANWHILE...*INSIDE* THE FORTRESS OF TERROR...!

EEYAAAA!

CRACK!

THAT'S *ENOUGH*, GLOM! THE MEAT SHOULD BE THOROUGHLY *TENDERIZED* BY NOW!

YOU MAY HAVE HER WHEN I AM *THROUGH!*

NOW, MY DEAR...! NO MORE *PAIN!* ONLY *PLEASURE...!*

IN FACT... YOU WILL *DIE* OF PLEASURE! FIRST, YOU WILL RECEIVE *MY* ATTENTIONS, THEN THE ATTENTIONS OF MY *ATTENDANTS* AND MY *GUARD*... THEN MY *ARMY!*

SO! IT'S JUST AS I *THOUGHT!*

HUH?

THAT'S WHY THEY CALL YOU THE *HALVE-NOTS!* YOU DON'T HAVE HALF THE GENITALIA OF A CASTRATED FIELD MOUSE...!

OH... IT'S *YOU!* ONE OF THOSE RODENTS FROM THE *FOREST!* I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU GOT HERE... BUT THROWING YOU OUT WILL ONLY TAKE A *MOMENT!*

ANDIF SWUNG, AND THE FAT MAN'S RIGHT HAND *SAILED* ACROSS THE ROOM...!

AGHHHH!

CHOP!

HE REACHED FOR HIS SWORD WITH HIS *LEFT* HAND... BUT AGAIN ANDIF WAS TOO *SWIFT!*

THUNK!

NOOOOOOO!

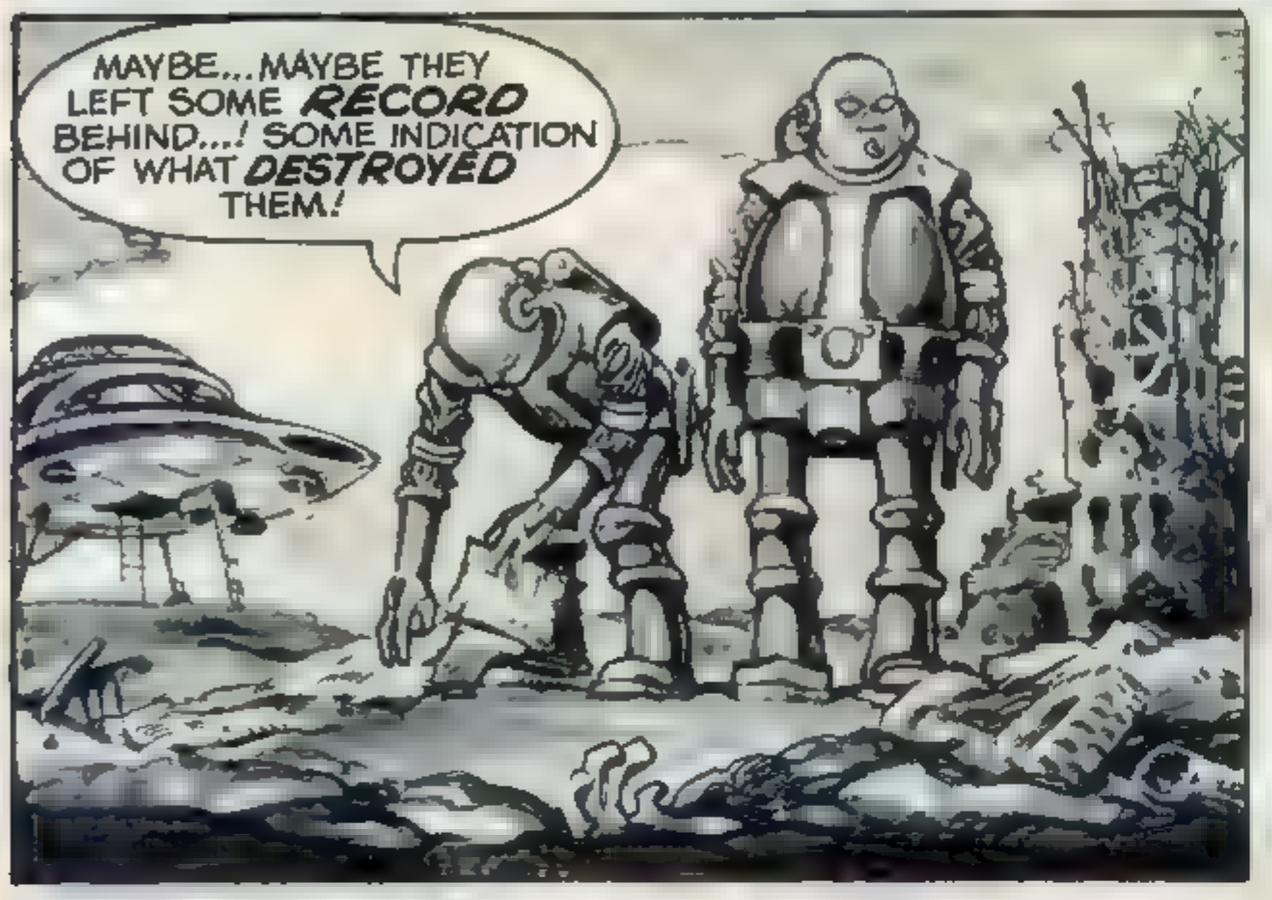
HURRIEDLY THE ABUSED AMAZON STUFFED A *GAG* INTO THE EVIL LORD'S MOUTH. ANDIF, GRATEFUL FOR THE ASSIST EVER SO SLOWLY UNSHEATHED HIS *DAGGER...!*

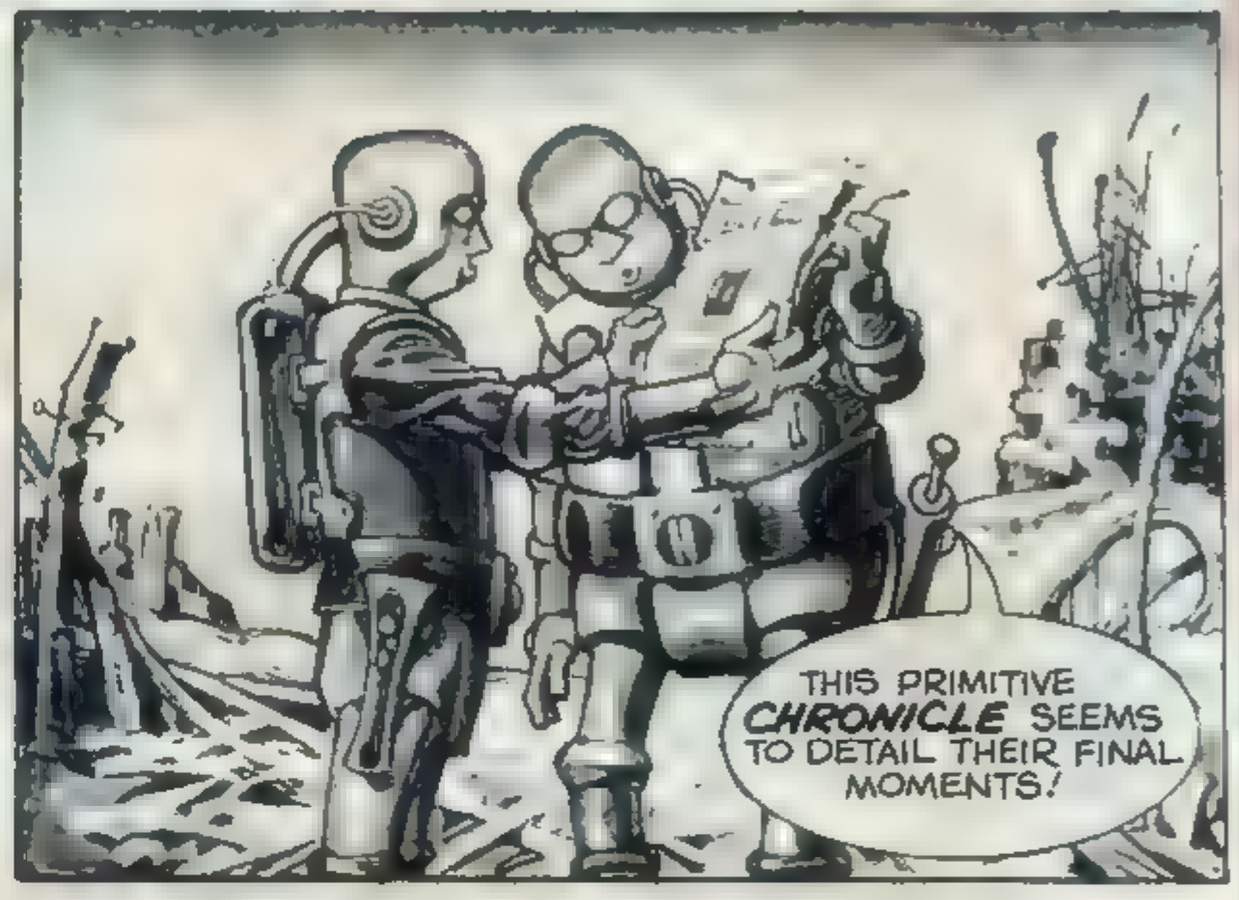
THE COLLECTOR COULD SEE BY THE DEADLY INTENT IN ANDIF'S EYES THAT HIS *TIME HAD COME...!*

LEGEND HAS IT THAT THE COLLECTOR DID *NOT* DIE THAT DAY! SUFFICE IT TO SAY, HOWEVER, THAT NEVER AGAIN DID HE HAVE THE FAINTEST *SEXUAL URGE...!*

THE SAGA OF XATZ AND XOTZ

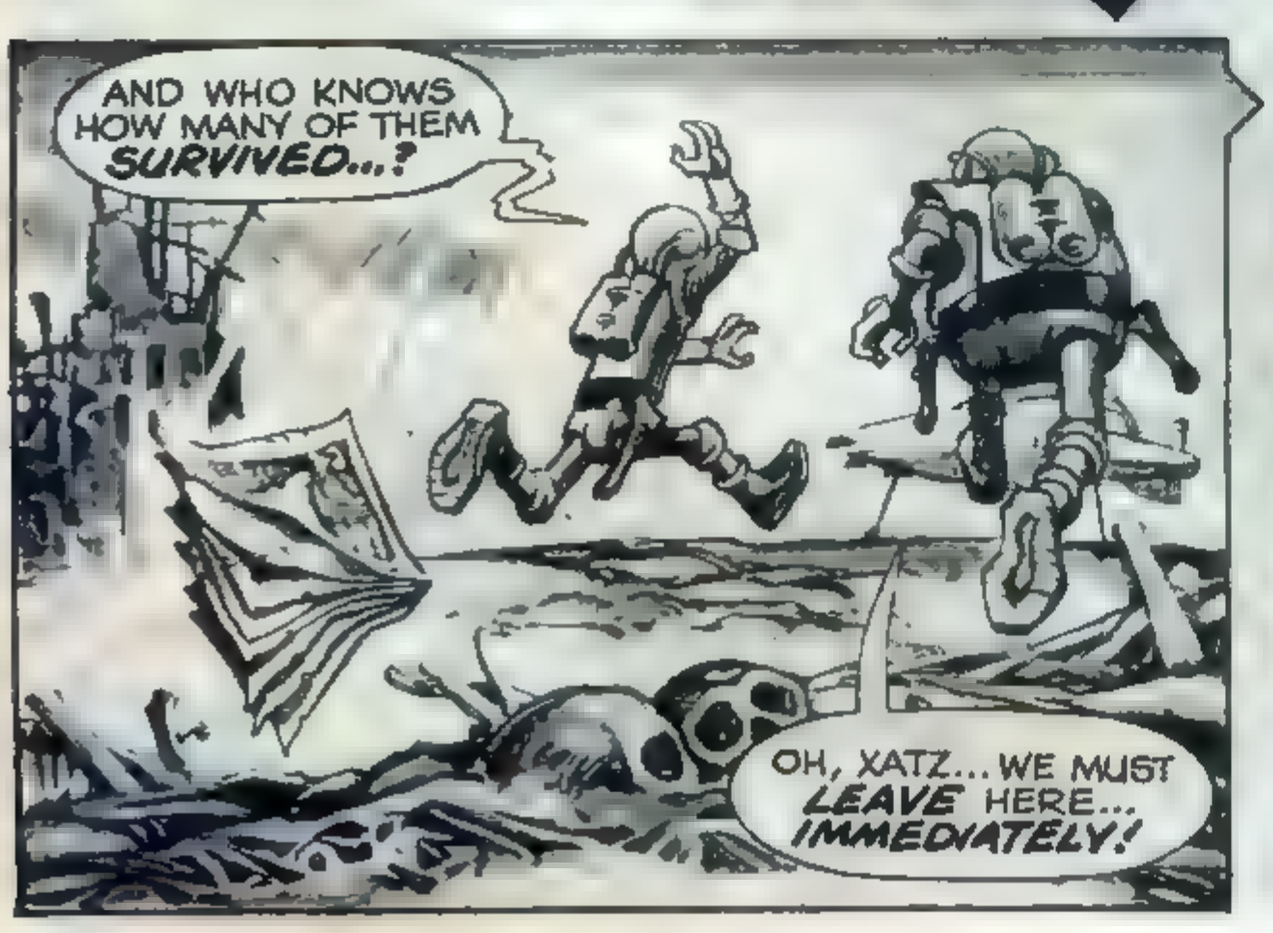












OH SHIT, CAP'N! WE GOT *COMPANY!* THREE HUNDRED *METERS* OFF THE PORT BOW!

COMPANY!? OUT *HERE?* WHAT THE HELL'S AN EARTH SHIP DOING IN *UNCHARTED* TERRITORY?

IT'S MORE THAN *ONE* VESSEL, SIR...!

AND... UH... SOMETHING TELLS ME... THEY'RE *NOT* FROM *EARTH!*

BUGS!

Author: BILL DuBAY/Illustrator: JOE VAULTZ

ATTENTION, ALIEN STARCRAFT! THIS IS CAPTAIN HORATIO T. BEAUCHAMP OF THE UNITED EARTH EXPLORATION FORCE!

CAN YOU READ ME?

THEY'RE JUST SITTING THERE...

TH... THEY'RE NOT ANSWERING, SIR!

...LIKE THEY'RE WAITING FOR US TO DO SOMETHING!

Y-YOU DON'T THINK THEY'RE HOSTILE DO YOU, SIR?

HOSTILE? HELL NO, BOY...!

THEY PROBABLY JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND ENGLISH IS ALL!

TRY A LITTLE CHINESE ON 'EM, SIR!

GOOD IDEA!

STILL NOTHING!

W-WHY DON'T THEY RESPOND?

WHY DON'T THEY DO SOMETHING?

MAYBE THEY CAN'T HEAR! MAYBE THEY'RE A RACE WITHOUT SENSES AS WE KNOW THEM!

I... I WISH THEY'D DO SOMETHING, SIR! IT'S GETTING TENSE IN HERE!

C-CAPTAIN... LOOK!

THEY'RE COMING AT US!

WITH THEIR JAWS WIDE OPEN!!

THEY'RE GONNA EAT US ALIVE!

CALM DOWN, DOC! THEY'RE FINALLY MAKING CONTACT IS ALL!

THIS IS PROBABLY A ROCKET PORT... AND THEY'RE JUST OPENING UP TO TAKE US ABOARD!

SOON NOW... WE'LL BE FACE TO FACE WITH ALIEN BEINGS...!

JUST THINK...! EARTH'S FIRST EXTRATERRESTRIAL CONTACT!

CAP'N...! TH-THIS AIN'T LIKE NO ROCKET PORT I EVER SEEN!

IT...IT'S AWFUL *DARK* HERE, CAP'N...! WHAT'LL WE *DO*?

DO!? WE DO *NOTHING*, MEN... UNTIL THEY TURN ON THE *LIGHTS!*

C-CAP'N... *CAP'N!* OH GOD, CAP'N' WHAT'RE THEY *DOIN'* T' US?

OH LORD! THEY... THEY'RE ATTACKIN' THE SHIP WITH SOME KINDA PERVERTED *CAN OPENER!*

LORD, CAP'N! OH GOD, CAP'N! *HELP US!* TH... THAT *AIN'T* NO CAN OPENER!

THAT'S *TEETH!*

AIIIIIEEEEEE!

HOW WAS IT, BLAANDOR?

KIND OF TOUGH SHELL. PTUI!!

BUT THE *INSIDE* WAS MIGHTY *TASTY!*

I THINK THERE'S ANY *MORE* WHERE *THAT* CAME FROM?

ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT, BLAANDOR!!

YEAH! LET'S GO!

LEPROUS CREATURES SCURRY THROUGH THE SHADOWS, DESPERATELY SEARCHING FOR FOOD. DRY WINDS SCATTER CLOUDS OF POISONOUS DUST AND THE WORLD SEEMS TO QUAKE IN THE FINAL SILENT DEATH THROE. A SICKLY RAT EMERGES FROM THE RUINS. IT STAGGERS. COUGHS FITFULLY THEN SPEWS FORTH A TIDE OF INTESTINAL **BLOOD.**

SKIK!

SUDDENLY... THERE IS A SKITTERING OF CLAWS. AND THE RODENT IS AWARE OF A SHARP PENETRATING PAIN AT THE BASE OF ITS SKULL.

SKIK! SKOUGH!

...AND NOT AN ORDINARY MUTANT INSECT HAS GONE TO ... HAS LEFT **EGGS** BURIED IN THE RAT'S ... WRITHING PAIN-WRACKED BODY ... INCUBATE. HOWEVER, ITS ... LUNGS WILL SOON ... FOREVER. IT WILL ... GNAWING AGONY ... BECOME A HUNGRY LARVA AND ... FROM **WITHIN**

MUTANT WORLD

RICHARD CORBEN

Author and Illustrator: **RICHARD CORBEN**

A FEW DAYS LATER, A HULKING, BEASTIAL FIGURE PAUSES BY THE DEAD RAT. THE MAN-MUTANT ***DIMENTO***, LIKE ALL THE INHABITANTS OF THE DYING WORLD... IS ***HUNGRY.***

MMM...! FAT RAT! I EAT!

YEEUUCK! RAT GOT ***WORMS*** INSIDE.

DIMENTO NOT LIKE CRUNCHY ***NORMS.***

BUT WHERE DIMENTO FIND ***FOOD?***

BUG

MAYBE... MAYBE I ***HIDE***... AND FOOD COME ALONG ***TRAIL!***

NO PARKIN

=OOOH!= STOMACH HURT! NOTHING COME BY HERE. FOOD NOT ***COOPERATIVE*** TODAY!

MAYBE CRUNCHY WORMS NOT BAD AFTER ALL! EH?

KLIPOK KLIPOK KLIPOK

WHAT THAT NOISE?

SOMETHING COMES TO TAKE DIMENTO'S RAT! DIMENTO GET MAD! DIMENTO KILL! THEN DIMENTO EAT!

KLIPOK KLIPOK KLIPOK

NO...! NOTHING COME! DIMENTO ONLY HEAR HEAD NOISES!

YIPE!

KLIPOK KLIPOK

THAK!

AH...! DIMENTO EAT HORSE!

OH, NO YOU WON'T!

TONK!

GAAAAAAA!

CRACK!

DIMENTO EAT *WOMAN!*

WHAT? NO! NOW WAIT A MINUTE.

YOU CAN'T GO AROUND *EATING* PEOPLE! THAT'S *CANNIBALISM!* IT JUST ISN'T *DONE!*

HUH? WELL, I UH... DIMENTO WASN'T REALLY GOING TO EAT YOU...! YES... I EAT *HORSE!*

THAT'S *TERRIBLE!* YOU CAN'T DO THAT EITHER. I *NEED* MY HORSE TO PULL MY WAGON.

BUT DIMENTO AWFUL *HUNGRY!* YOU GOT SOMETHING *ELSE?* A *DOG* MAYBE?

I'M VERY SORRY, DIMENTO. I SYMPATHIZE WITH YOUR PLIGHT...BUT I HAVEN'T A *CRUMB* FOR YOU!

SOMEHOW THIS NOT *WORK OUT* FOR DIMENTO.

SAY! I KNOW WHERE YOU CAN FIND A *DELICIOUS* MEAL! A REGULAR CONNOISSEUR'S *DELIGHT.* I STUMBLED ONTO A *NEST* A WAYS BACK THERE...

...HAD SOME GREAT LOOKIN' **EGGS** IN IT TOO! WOULD'DA TAKEN 'EM MYSELF IF I WASN'T IN SUCH A HURRY! YOU **DO** LIKE **EGGS** DON'T YOU?

EGGS YUMMY!

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THAT WAS SURE NICE OF WOMAN TO TELL DIMENTO ABOUT **FOOD!**

MMMM! EGGS IN **THERE!**

AHH! **BIG** EGGS! A **CONNOISSEURS DELIGHT** SHE SAY... WHATEVER **THAT** MEAN!

HE WENT IN THERE, ZUG! YOU CIRCLE AROUND TO MAKE SURE HE DON'T GET **OUT** THE BACK WAY!

DIMLIT AND I WILL WAIT **HERE** FOR HIM.

YEP!

AND DON'T WASTE ANY **SHOTS!**

MMMM! FOOD AT LAST.

UGH! TOUGH SHELL.

THUMP! THUMP!

KRAK!

I SAY WE EAT HIM FIRST.

SHUDDUP, PEBBLE BRAIN! I GIVE THE ORDERS AROUND HERE! WE EAT THE EGG FIRST.

GOSH DARN TOUGHASS EGG!

BONK! BONK! BONK!

GRRR! I'LL KILL THIS FRIGGIN' EGG!

LOOK, WEASEL. IT'S DOIN' SOMETHING.

HUH?

ZZZZRRRRRZZZ

YAUGH!

STK!

ZZZIIPP!

AAH! DIMLIT! ZUG! GET THIS THING OFF ME! EE ECHHH!

OOUGH! PULL! PULL! IT'S EATIN' ME! PULL IT OFF, YOU FOOLS!

YAARGH! IT'S EATIN' MY GODDAMN WANGSNIPPER!

GAAAAAA!

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAGGHHHHHHHH!

TOO BAD ABOUT *WEASEL!*

BUT *DIMLIT'S* NOT GOING HUNGRY!

BLAM!

UH OH...!

HA! HA! GOOD SHOT WASN'T IT!

GEE...! WOMAN SAVED DIMENTO. THAT *NICE*. BUT DIMENTO STILL *HUNGRY*. MAYBE I EAT *DIMLIT!* HOPE I GET *FREE* BEFORE *WORMS* COME! *UGH!* WORMS JUST TOO *CRUNCHY* FOR DIMENTO.

SEE YA IN MY DREAMS, HON!

AS THE EVENING DRAWS ITS DUSKY VEIL TO A CLOSE, DIMENTO HAPPILY CONTEMPLATES HIS NEXT MEAL. LITTLE DOES HE SUSPECT, THAT AS HE WAITS IN THE OPEN, THE NIGHT-PREDATORS ALREADY PREPARE FOR THE EVENING'S *HUNT!*

OCT. 3RD, 1926. HANNIBAL, MISSOURI. THE BEDROOM OF **ELIAS NEWTON ZONG**, SODFARMER AND AMATEUR INVENTOR...

MR. ZONG, HOW DID YOU COME TO DISCOVER **FASTER-THAN-LIGHT PROPULSION?**

IT WAS STRANGE. ONE MORNING I WOKE UP AND FOUND I COULD NOT ACCEPT PROFESSOR EINSTEIN'S **THEORY OF RELATIVITY.** THAT IS, THAT THE SPEED OF LIGHT WAS **TOPS,** AND THAT YOU **COULDN'T** TRAVEL FASTER THAN THAT.

SO ME AND BARNEY HERE, E PUT IN A LITTLE WORK IN THE IOP AND EVENTUALLY WE CAME WITH MY NOW-FAMOUS FASTER-IAN-LIGHT PROPULSION, WHICH I CALL **ZONG DRIVE.**

AND SONNY, THAT MOVES **FAST!**

PHENOMENAL!

REMARKABLE!

AND IS IT TRUE THAT YOU NOW PROPOSE **SIGHTSEEING TOURS** FOR THE PUBLIC, IN WHICH THEY WILL SEE A **NUMBER** OF STAR SYSTEMS IN A MATTER OF **HOURS?**

THAT IS SO. WE ARE WORKING CLOSELY WITH A MAJOR **TRAVEL AGENCY,** WHO WILL BE PACKAGING THESE TOURS FOR US.

FANTASTIC!

SENSATIONAL!

BUT HAVEN'T YOU **FORGOTTEN** SOMETHING, MR. ZONG? WHAT ABOUT THE **MONSTERS?**

HE'S **RIGHT!** WHAT **ABOUT** THE MONSTERS!

YES, THE **MONSTERS!**

I AM OF COURSE, AWARE THAT THE MONSTERS LIVE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE **SPEED SPECTRUM.** WE ARE TAKING EVERY PRECAUTION FOR THE SAFETY OF OUR PASSENGERS.

ONE LAST QUESTION, MR. ZONG--!

WHY DOES A MAN WITH NO BACKGROUND IN SCIENCE BECOME INTERESTED IN THE **EXPLORATION OF SPACE?**

I MEAN, YOU'RE A **SODFARMER,** AREN'T YOU?

NOT IF THE PUBLIC WILL BUY THESE **TICKETS,** I'M NOT!

FASTER THAN LIGHT INTERSTELLAR TRAVEL

See the Stars

Reserve Now

Galaxies Galore

Visit 24 Planets in 24 Hours

Behold the Wonders of the Universe

Live Stage Shows

Good Food

HEY, HONEY - I'VE GOT A **SWELL** IDEA! INSTEAD OF GOING TO PISMO BEACH THIS YEAR, LET'S SPEND OUR VACATION ON **ALPHA-CENTAURI!**

SWELL IDEA, SWEETHEART! THE CHILDREN WILL ENJOY THE CHANGE OF PACE!

FASTER THAN LIGHT INTERSTELLAR TRAVEL

FROM E.N. ZONG & CO. YOUR GUIDES TO THE STARS

Author: JIM STENSTRUM/Illustrator: LUIS BERMEJO

WORD SPREADS FAST OF THE WONDROUS RIDE TO THE STARS OFFERED BY ELIAS ZONG, ATTRACTING THE FAMOUS AND NOT-SO-FAMOUS TO THE BANKS OF THE MISSISSIPPI NEAR HANNIBAL.

NAMES?

WILL YOU WANT **FIRST** OR **SECOND** CLASS.

MR. AND MRS. F. SCOTT FITZGERALD.

SUH! I ONLY GO **FIRST CLASS!**

GOT ROOM IN STEERAGE FOR AN OLD **ARMY BUDDY**, ELIAS.

SAMMY LEACH! YOU SLY FOX! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

I HEARD WHAT YOU WE RE UP TO, ELIAS. I - HAD TO SEE IT FOR **MYSELF.**

WONDERFUL, SAMMY! WHAT DO YOU **THINK** OF HER?

OVER **300 FEET** FROM BOW TO PADDLEWHEEL. **FOUR** PAIR OF WINGS, **30** COMFORTABLE CABINS WITH BATHS, A COACH, A LOUNGE, AND AN AMPHITHEATRE WITH COMPLETE ORCHESTRA!

THE **MARVEL** OF THE CENTURY, **SPANNER** OF THE GALAXY...!..

ELIAS, IT'S **INSPIRING!**

SHUCKS, YOU AIN'T SEEN ***NUTHIN'*** YET! WAIT'LL YOU SEE ***OUTER SPACE!*** ***COMETS*** AND ***STARS*** AND ALL KIND OF STUFF LIKE THAT!

WHAT I'D REALLY LIKE RIGHT NOW IS TO SEE ONE OF THOSE COMFORTABLE CABINS WITH A BATH.

SURE BET, SAMMY, BOY!

BARNEY, HELP MY OLD ARMY BUDDY TO AN EXECUTIVE CABIN, WILL YOU?

YASSUH.

AND THEN COME UP TO THE ***BRIDGE***, SAMMY. YOU'LL GET A FRONT ROW VIEW OF THE ***LAUNCHING!***

THANKS, ELIAS.

SHORTLY...!

WELCOME ABOARD! THIS IS ELIAS ZONG SPEAKING.

IN A MOMENT, WE WILL BE LAUNCHING, OUT OF EARTH'S ORBIT AND TOWARD THE ***WONDERS OF THE UNIVERSE!***

HOORAY!

WE WILL BE FLYING AT AN ALTITUDE OF 300 LIGHT YEARS, AND AT A SPEED OF ***ZONG EIGHT!*** LUNCH AND DINNER WILL BE SERVED DURING LUNCHTIME AND DINNER-TIME, AND AS FOR ENTERTAINMENT, ***WILL RODGERS*** WILL BE PERFORMING IN OUR AMPHITHEATRE AFTER SUNDOWN...!

SO HI HO, AWAY WE GO, AND THANK YOU FOR FLYING WITH ***ZONG LINES!***

MISTUH LEACH? WE'S ***LAUNCHIN'***, SUH. MISTUH ZONG IS WAITIN' FOR YOU.

I'LL BE RIGHT THERE, BARNEY.

GLAD YOU COULD MAKE IT IN TIME, SAMMY, WE'RE JUST ABOUT TO LEAVE PORT NOW.

JEEPERS, ELIAS. ALL THESE LEVERS AND BUTTONS AND WHEELS. IT REALLY TAKES ***THIS MUCH*** TO RUN A SPACESHIP?

PSHAW! ALL THAT'S JUST FOR ***FOOD PREPARATION.***

THIS IS WHAT ***RUNS*** THE SHIP! THE ***ZONGATRON!***

STOKE UP THE ***STEAM***, BARNEY! WE'RE ***CASTING OFF!***

YASSUH.

THAT LITTLE BOX? ***THAT*** RUNS THE ***WHOLE SHIP?*** ***HOW??***

'IT'S ALL VERY **SCIENTIFIC**, BUT I'LL TRY TO EXPLAIN: WHAT KIND OF WHEEL MAKES MORE ROTATIONS WHEN TURNED AT THE SAME RATE OF SPEED: A **BIG** WHEEL OR A **SMALL** WHEEL?'

'A **SMALL** WHEEL.'

'RIGHT! AND THE **SMALLER** THE WHEEL?...'

'THE FASTER IT **ROTATES**...'

RRRRRMMMMM!

'AND WHAT IF SOMEBODY BUILT A TEENSY WEENSY LITTLE BABY WHEEL THAT YOU COULD HARDLY EVEN SEE...?'

GOODBYE!

BON VOYAGE!

ARRIVERDERCI!

SEE YOU LATER!

'IT WOULD ROTATE **EXTREMELY** FAST, I GUESS. I THINK.'

'YOU'RE DOING FINE. AND WHAT IF SOMEBODY **ATTACHED** A HUGE WHEEL TO THE TEENSY WHEEL...?'

'IT WOULD TURN THE PADDLEWHEEL LIKE **CRAZY!**'

SQUEEK!

SQUEEK!

SQUEEK!

'AND IF YOU REALLY GAVE THAT LITTLE WHEEL THE **STEAM**...?'

'THE SHIP WILL **SPRING** OUT OF THE WATER AND RIGHT INTO **OUTER-SPACE!**'

CLANG!

WHOP!

SPRANG!

SQUEEK!

SQUEEK!

'IT'S ALL VERY SCIENTIFIC, REALLY.'

A MARVELOUS INVENTION THE ZONGATRON WOULDN'T YOU SAY?

BARNEY, WE NEED MORE STEAM!

VERY MARVELOUS. VERY, **VERY** MARVELOUS.

YASSUH.

KERONG!

WE'VE **DONE** IT! WE'VE **ESCAPED** THE EARTH!

CHURN!

PADDLE!

WHOOOT!

'SCAPED THE URTH!?

AIN'T NOBODY TOLE ME NOTHIN' 'BOUT SCAPIN' NO URTH!

IT'S ALL RIGHT, BARNEY. I'VE GOT EVERYTHING UNDER CONTROL...OOPS!

HOOBOY! JUST MISSED THE MOON!

WHEEEE!

SOUNDS LIKE A CROWD PLEASER, ELIAS. DO IT AGAIN!

TIME ENOUGH FOR THAT LATER. WE'VE GOT PLENTY MORE SIGHTS TO SEE AND A TIGHT SCHEDULE TO SEE THEM WITH!

MORE STEAM! MORE STEAM!

AH'S WORKIN' AS FAST AS AH KIN, MASSAH!

MEANWHILE, IN FIRST CLASS...!

IT'S AWFULLY BLACK OUT THERE! I CAN'T USE MY BROWNIE!

DORIS! FOR CRYING OUT LOUD, IT'S NIGHT OUT THERE! WAIT TILL THE SUN COMES UP!

MAYBE IF I GOT CLOSER--!

NO DORIS! DON'T OPEN THAT PORTHOLE! :URK!:

SUUUKK!

AHHHHHHRRR

MAN BACK THERE LOST HIS WIFE, ELIAS. SHE WAS SUCKED THROUGH A PORTHOLE AND FELL BACK TO EARTH.

IT'S OKAY, THOUGH, THE MAN FOUND A GIRL IN COACH HE LIKES BETTER.

AS LONG AS THERE ARE NO COMPLAINTS, WE DON'T HAVE TO TURN BACK!

HAND ME THAT TALK TUBE, SAMMY. I SEE SOMETHING COMING UP.

YOUR ATTENTION, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. IF YOU WILL LOOK OUT YOUR PORTSIDE, YOU WILL SEE ONE OF THE MOST SPECTACULAR PHENOMENON IN THE GALAXY.

THE BIRTH OF A PLANET!

SLLLKKF!

THERE IT GOES! A HEALTHY NEWBORN PLANET!

A RARE, RARE SIGHT... BROUGHT TO YOU BY E.N. ZONG AND CO.

AWWWWWN!

IT'S SO CUTE!

COOCHY! COOCHY!

POPP!

YOU'VE WON THE PASSENGERS OVER, ELIAS. YOU'VE REALLY GOT A MONEY-MAKING OPERATION HERE.

I'M GONNA MAKE A BUNDLE, BROTHER.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IF YOU WILL NOW LOOK OUT YOUR STARBOARD...!

YOU'LL SEE THE FAMOUS NAVIGATOR OF THE SAILORS, THE ORIGINAL NORTH STAR.

BRRR!

SOMEBODY TURN UP THE HEAT!

ZONG! ZONG! ZONG!

HEAR THAT?

WE'VE BROKEN THE ZONG BARRIER!

WALL I DIN' BUST IT.

NO, NO! THE ZONG BARRIER IS FINE, BARNEY! WHAT THAT MEANS IS WE'RE NOW TRAVELING FASTER THAN THE SPEED OF LIGHT!

LAND O'GOSHINS!

GOLLY WOBBLERS!

WE'VE GOT TO CELEBRATE!

BARNEY, GET A BOTTLE OF WINE FOR US FROM THE WINE CELLAR, WILL YOU?

YASSUH!

YOU HAVE A *WINE CELLAR* TOO?

WELL, *SORT* OF!

IT'S A *TRAPDOOR*, REALLY... LEADING TO THE *OUTSIDE*.

IT KEEPS THE WINE AND BEER REAL COLD.

YOU'RE AN ASTONISHING, MAN, ELIAS.

THAT I AM.

I'D LIKE TO MAKE THIS TOAST: TO THE *ZONG ZOOMWHEELER*... MAY IT MAKE ME VERY *RICH!*

AND ME *TOO*, BOSS! YOU SAID YOU'D TAKE *CARE* OF ME.

AND *ESPECIALLY* TO BARNEY...WITHOUT WHOM THIS TRIP WOULD NOT BE *POSSIBLE*, LET ALONE *PLEASURABLE*.

AW, SHOOT.

ELIAS. *LOOK!* THE *WINDOWS!* THEY'VE ALL GONE *WHITE!*

WE'VE JUST PASSED THROUGH THE *MILKY WAY*, THAT'S ALL, SAMMY!

SEE? WE'RE OUT OF IT NOW! NOTHING TO FEAR.

WHAPPA-WHAPPA-WHAP

NOW WHAT'S THE MATTER?

WHY HAVE WE *STOPPED*?

YOU LOOK *FRIGHTENED*, ELIAS!

I HAVE *REASON* TO BE.

BOOW!

DOW!

DOW!

SPAKT!

UH OH. *I* SEE THE PROBLEM.

THE PADDLEWHEEL CAUGHT A PIECE OF THE MILKY WAY AND SPUN IT UP INTO *CHEESE*. WE'RE STUCK UNTIL SOMEBODY CAN GET OUT THERE AND CLEAN IT OFF.

I WONDER *WHO--!*

YOU'D BETTER BUNDLE UP *TIGHT*, BARNEY. IT'S *BITTER COLD* OUT THERE.

AH DON' KNOW WHY AH HASTA DO ALLA *WORK* 'ROUN' HEAH.

ARE YOU *COMPLAINING*, BARNEY? AFTER THE WAY I *TOASTED* YOU?

UH, NO SUH.

BE *CAREFUL*, BARNEY!

COME BACK IN IF YOU RUN INTO ANY *TROUBLE*!

I-I WILL.

IT SHO' IS *SCARY* OUT HERE IN DE *DARK*, ALL BY MY *LONESOME*.

SHO AM GLAD AH'S ALMOSHT *FINISHED*..!

SQUEEK!

SQUEEK!

WHA? WHOZAT?

LAWDY! IT'S GIANT *SPACE RATS!* DEY'S LOOKIN' FOR DA *CHEESE*!

SQUEEK!

SQUEEK!

SQUEEK!

SQU

GOWAN, YOU NASTY SPACE RATS!

GET YOAHSELFS OUTA HEAH!

WHITANGGGG!

SQUEEEEEEEEEEEEEK!

BE FLEET, FEET! JUS' LISTEN TO MAH HEARTBEAT!

SQUEE SQUEE SQUEEE EEEEE!

MONSTERS! MONSTERS!

THAT'S WHAT I WAS AFRAID OF. WE WERE FINE AS LONG AS WE WERE MOVING FAST. BUT ONCE WE STOPPED THE MONSTERS CAUGHT US!

THE PADDLEWHEEL IS FREE! FULL SPEED AHEAD!

SQUEEK! SQUEEK! SPAKV! BTON! WHAPP!

I THINK THAT DID IT. THE SHIP IS SAFE!

NOT QUITE, ELIAS.

HOLY MACKEREL! A GUN!

I'M STEALING YOUR ZONGATRON, ELIAS. HAND IT OVER!

I NEVER DID LIKE YOU SAMMY EVEN IN THE ARMY.

BOSS!

DON'T TRY ANYTHING, BARNEY. YOU'LL ONLY GET HURT.

IT'S NOTHING AGAINST YOU PERSONALLY, ELIAS. IT'S JUST I'M TIRED OF WORKING FOR A LIVING, AND I CAN SELL YOUR ZONGATRON FOR A BILLION DOLLARS.

I HOPE WE CAN STILL BE FRIENDS.

HUMPH!

BARNEY!

LOOK BEHIND YOU!

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO TRY THAT OLD ONE, ARE YOU, ELIAS?

ZONGA

THE RATS'VE GOT HIM!

GRAB THE ZONGATRON, BARNEY!

GOT IT!

YEEOOOWWWW!

BAAMM!

SQUEEK!

SQUEEK

THE MONSTERS, BARNEY! I'LL HOLD THEM OFF WHILE YOU RUN FOR IT!

SQUEEEK

SQUEEE

NO, SUH! I'M HEAH TO STAY!

BARNEY! UGGH! QUICK!

OPEN...URG... OPEN THE WINE CELLAR!

THE WINE CELLAH? YESSAH!

SQUEEK!

DEAH DEY GO, BOSS!

SQUEE SQUEE SQUEE EEEEE!

SQUEEEEEEE

YOU, TOO, YA DUHTY RAT!

WHITANGGG!

EEEEEEEEE!

MISTUH ZONG!

YOU BEEN HURT BAD, MISTUH ZONG?

YOU...SAID... A MOUTHFUL...!

MISTUH ZONG! HOW WE GONNA GET BACK TO *URTH*? AH DON' KNOW *NOTHIN'* 'BOUT FLYIN' NO *PADDLEBOATS!*

LISTEN... TO ME... BARNEY.

YOU'VE... GOT...TO... PRESS A BUTTON...!

IT'S THE... ONE...

...THE ONE MARKED...

URG... URG... AHHHHHH!

OH, LAWDY. MISTUH ZONG IS *DEAD*, AN' AH CAN'T FIND NO BUTTON DAT SAY *URG!*

WHAT I GONNA DO? I GOTTA TRY *SUMPTIN'!*

I...I GUESS I'LL TRY *DIS 'UN!*

GRIND!

SQUEEEEK!

=POOT!=

OH, LAWDY. AH'S *REALLY* DONE IT NOW!

NO YA DERN IDJIT! THAT'S THE *COFFEE GRINDER!*

PRESS *THIS* ONE!

BREEEEEEEEE!

RATTLE!

RATTLE!

CRUNCH!

CHEW!

SOMETIME LATER, IN A HOSPITAL BACK ON PLANET EARTH...!

MISTAH ZONG! DERE'S A WHOLE LONG LINE O' PEEPLE WAITIN' TO GO ON YO' NEX' *TRIP TO DA STAHS!*

WHAT?! BOTH MY *ARMS* ARE BROKEN; BOTH MY *LEGS* ARE BROKEN; I HAVE *MULTIPLE* CONTUSIONS; I'M SCHEDULED FOR *SPINAL SURGERY* IN THE MORNING... AND THEY WANT ME TO RUN OUT *NOW* AND TAKE OFF *AGAIN?!*

TELL THEM TO WAIT A WEEK!!

2014

BANDIT! COMIN' IN DUE EAST!

HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, JOYRAG! ANOTHER STEP AND I'LL POP YER CHERRIES!

BUT... I... I HAVE A MESSAGE FOR THE BISHOP!

THE BISHOP AIN'T GRANTIN' AUDIENCE T'DAY!

...AND WE'LL THINK ABOUT LETTIN' YA IN!

NOW IF YA WANNA LEAVE IT WITH ME... FATHER LOVE... YA CAN CRAWL ON YER HANDS AND KNEES T THE GATE 'A OUR HOLY ARCADE...

AWRIGHT, PECKERWOOD! GIMME THAT MESSAGE AND GET YOUR SCRAGGLY ASS OVER THERE WHERE SISTER MERCY'S ALL-GIRL HIT PARADE CAN KEEP AN EYE ON YA!

WON'T DO T' HAVE YA RUNNIN' 'ROUND DESECRATIN' THIS HOLY PLACE!

LESS' SEE WHAT ALL THIS IS 'BOUT...!

"MOST HOLY EMINENCE— SPARE AN ANGEL! THE TORMENTS OF HELL REDEEM YOUR CHILD'S SOUL FOR ONLY FIFTY AUTOMATIC RIFLES AND TWO CASELOADS OF FOOD!— RESPECTFULLY YOURS, COLONEL BLOOD!"

WHAT!?

SUCK LEAD, DUNG HEAP!

YOU'VE KIDNAPPED ANGEL?!

N-NO... PLEASE!

IT'S NOT MY DOING! I...I WAS PAID ONE TIN OF RATIONS TO DELIVER THIS!

I...I AM BUT A HUMBLE MESSENGER!

AH...LET THE SQUIRREL GO! HE AIN'T GOT THE MEAT T'LIE TO A MAN'A THE CLOTH!

I'LL TELL BISHOP PIETY ABOUT THIS...!

HE AIN'T GONNA LIKE IT ONE BIT!

EMINENCE--!

IT IS I, YOUR GRACE... FATHER LOVE!

ER... I DO NOT MEAN TO DISTURB YOU IN THE SACRED SEPULCHER, HOLINESS--!

WILL YOU *KNOCK OFF* WITH THAT BOGUS REVERENCE CRAP, YA MOTHERGRABBIN' PINHEAD!

I *HEARD* THE SHOOTING! JUST *GIVE* ME THE *BAD NEWS!*

IT... IT'S *BLOOD* HADRIAN! HE... HE HAS *ANGEL!*

ANGEL...!? MY CHILD... IN THE HANDS OF THAT *BARBARIAN!?*

OH LORD, URIAH...! SHE'S AS GOOD AS *DEAD!*

IF *SHE'S* DEAD, SO IS THAT ASSWIPE *BLOOD!*

YOU...YOU KNOW HOW TO *FIND HER?*

I CAN GIVE IT A GOOD GUESS! GRAB THAT *HOLY VAPORIZER,* HADRIAN! I'LL TELL YA ON THE WAY!

WHAT IS THE *SAFEST, MOST SECURE* PLACE IN THIS ENTIRE DESOLATE REALM TO HIDE A TREASURE LIKE ANGEL?

WHY... THE *TREASURY VAULTS,* NATURALLY!

AND *WHERE* WAS IT WE WERE TRYING TO DISSUADE ANGEL FROM *GOING* BEFORE SHE SO BULL-HEADEDLY *LEFT US?*

OF COURSE... THE *VAULTS!*

ANGEL!

WHAT ARE WE *WAITING* FOR, URIAH?

WE'VE GOT TO SAVE AN...

Author: BILL DuBAY/Illustrator: RUDY NEBRES

OH LORD, URIAH...! WHAT IF WE'RE *TOO LATE?*

DON'T EVEN *THINK* IT, HADRIAN...! THAT GIRL ...SHE'S LIKE OUR OWN *DAUGHTER!*

TWENTY YEARS SINCE THEY DESTROYED THE WHOLE BALLBUSTING *WORLD!* OH, HADRIAN... HOW CAN THIS NIGHT MARE HAVE *LASTED* SO LONG?

IT SEEMS LIKE ONLY *YESTERDAY* SHE CAME TO US. CAN YOU BELIEVE, OLD FRIEND IT'S BEEN *TWO DECADES!?*

I STILL REMEMBER THAT NIGHT. IT WAS JUNE, 1944. THE WORLD WAS *CRUMBLING!* NATIONS WERE CRYING OUT FOR MORE *ROOM*... TO *HOUSE* THEIR MASSES! FOR MORE *FOOD* TO *FEED* THEIR HUNGRY! PEOPLE WERE *RIOTING* GOVERNMENTS WERE *TOPPLING!*

THERE WAS ONLY *ONE* SOLUTION TO THE RAMPANT PROBLEMS THAT GREW STEADILY! EVERYONE KNEW IT. THE NEWSPAPERS... THE MEDIA RAN DAILY FEATURES ON THE BLESSINGS AND BENEFITS OF ALL-OUT *GENOCIDE!*

WE WERE A SIMPLE SEMINARY IN THOSE DAYS. A SMALL ISOLATED *COMMUNE* DEVOTED TO *GOD.* YET THE TROUBLES OF THE OUTER WORLD TOUCHED EVEN HERE!

WAAAA!

THAT'S A *BABY!*

AT *OUR* DOOR?

NOW WHAT WOULD A BABY BE WANTING AT *THIS* TIME OF NIGHT?

I WENT TO THE DOOR AND I'LL NEVER FORGET THE — *TERROR* IN THE EYES OF THE WOMAN WHO THRUST THE INFANT INTO MY ARMS.

PLEASE, FATHER...! WATCH OVER HER! NO MATTER... *WHAT* HAPPENS!

SHE WAS *GONE* BEFORE I COULD PROTEST! AND I WAS LEFT WITH A CHILD AS *HELPLESS*... AS *CONFUSED* AS MYSELF!

WE NEVER KNEW HER *REAL* NAME, SO WE CALLED THE BABY *ANGEL!* THE SISTERS SHOWERED HER WITH LOVE, BUT LOVE *ALONE* COULD NOT PROTECT HER FROM THE HORRORS OF A WORLD INSANE WITH NEED!

OH MY GOD! *MISSLES!*

RUN!

EVERYONE TO THE *SHELTERS!* IT... IT'S *STARTED!*

JUDGEMENT DAY...

WHADOOM!

I WAS ONLY ONE OF THE **MANY** TO CATCH THE SHOCK-WAVES OF THOSE FIRST TERRIBLE BLASTS. BROTHERS ...SISTERS I HAD LOVED WERE RIPPED TO **PIECES** AROUND ME! I TRIED TO SHELTER THE **CHILD**... BUT I KNEW MY MEAGER FORM WAS POOR PROTECTION AGAINST THE INTENSE NUCLEAR **BARRAGE!**

I FELT MYSELF **DYING**... AND I KNEW I WAS TAKING THE BABY **WITH** ME!

WELL WHATTAYA KNOW! HE MAY HAVE GOTTEN HIS CURLY LOCKS **BURNT OFF**... BUT THE HOODLUM PRIEST **LIVES!**

AH SHUCKS! AN' HERE I WAS HOPIN' I'D WAKE UP IN **HEAVEN!**

AND WHO SAYS THIS **ISN'T** HEAVEN, FATHER? **LOOK**... WE'VE EVEN GOT OUR OWN RESIDENT **ANGEL!**

OH LORD! SHE... SHE'S!

THANKS TO **YOU** YOU SKIN-HEADED LUG, SHE'S **FINE!**

ANGEL CAKES... YOU'RE ENOUGH TO MAKE A GROWN MAN CRY!

BILLIONS DIED IN THE TERRIBLE MAN-MADE FIRE-STORMS THAT BATTERED THE WORLD. RACIAL GENOCIDE NEARLY BECAME ALL-OUT **SUICIDE**. FEW OF US SURVIVED. BUT WHILE THE AFTERMATH OF ARMAGEDDON RAGED WITHOUT, WE DUTIFULLY SET TO CREATING A **NEW LIFE** WITHIN THE CONFINES OF OUR OUR WALLS!

WHILE WHAT REMAINED OF THE WORLD SUCCUMBED TO **SAVAGERY**, WE LIVED FOR **YEARS** IN OUR UNDER-GROUND CATACOMBS, WAITING FOR THE DEADLY RADIATIONS TO **DISPERSE!** YEARS... WHERE WE WATCHED OUR **CHILD** GROW INTO A **LITTLE GIRL** WITH A MIND HUNGRY FOR KNOWLEDGE!

WHEN THE TIME FINALLY CAME FOR US TO VENTURE INTO THE SUN... WE KNEW FULL WELL WE'D HAVE TO ALTER OUR WAYS AND SIMPLY TO **SURVIVE!**

IT'S SAD, ANGEL DARLIN'; BUT THERE ARE MEN WHO'VE FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT THE LOVE OF **GOD!**

WE'VE GOTTA TEACH YOU TO *PROTECT* YOUR-SELF FROM THEIR SINFUL WAYS!

HA! HA! HA! HA! EVEN IF IT MEANS INCURIN' THE WRATH OF AN M-18 WITH THE KICK OF A **MULE!**

YEAH... THAT CHILD GREW UP WITH **SPUNK!** I STILL REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME I WAS **'PERSUADED'** INTO TAKING HER ALONG TO THE TRADE-MARKET

YA BUGGERING, DOG-LICKING, DOUCH BAG! WHATTAYA **MEAN** I'M TOO FRAIL T'GO WITH YA?

EVEN THEN ANGEL COULD BE MOST **PERSUASIVE!** SHE WORMED HER WAY INTO OUR HEARTS AND WRAPPED US ALL AROUND HER FORMIDABLE LITTLE FINGERS.

BE **GENTLE** WITH THE MERCHANTS, DEAR! REMEMBER, THEY'RE ONLY **MEN!**

IT SEEMED THE WORLD WAS JUST CREEPING OUT OF THE **SLUDGE PITS** IN THOSE DAYS...! WHAT FEW REMAINED OF THAT GOOD-HEARTED PORTION OF HUMANITY STRIVED TO WORK TOGETHER...TO **REBUILD** A WORKABLE SOCIETY!

LISTEN, POPS...! THESE GOLD CANDLESTICKS ARE WORTH **TWICE** WHAT YOU'RE ASKIN' FOR THAT WAGON LOAD'A ROTTIN' FRUIT!

PERHAPS THEY WERE **ONCE,** MY FRIEND...BUT THE GOLD STANDARD IS... ER... SOMEWHAT **PASSE,** WOULDN'T YOU SAY?

YOU'LL **TAKE** THE OFFER, CLIT LIPS...OR I'LL WRING YER CHICKEN NECK!

THERE WERE THOSE, TOO, WHO WERE PRONE TO TAKE **ADVANTAGE** OF THE TUMULTUOUS TIMES...!

WATCHOUT, ANGEL! IT'S A **RAID!**

BKKA-BRKA-BKA!

EAT LEAD, BROWNHOLES! YOU AIN'T GOT A **PRAYER!**

UP TO THAT MOMENT, ANGEL WAS OUR *BABY*...! A CHILD WHO FOUGHT AT MY SIDE WITH THE FEROCITY OF A *SAVAGE BEAST!*

KCHUG!

AGHHH!

SHE EMERGED NOT ONLY *VICTORIOUS*... BUT A FULL-BLOWN *WOMAN!*

I WAS SO PROUD OF HER, I COULD HAVE CRIED! BUT I KNEW... THE LITTLE GIRL WE HAD KNOWN AND GIVEN SO MUCH LOVE, WAS *LOST* TO US FOREVER...

...AND A WOMAN WE COULD NEVER *HOPE* TO KNOW, HAD ARISEN TO TAKE HER PLACE!

OH *GOD*, HADRIAN! HOW I PRAY SHE IS *ALL RIGHT!*

YOU CHECKED OUR *HOSTAGE* LATELY, WOLFE?

SHIT, SAXON! SHE'S IN *CHAINS* TWO INCHES THICK! SHE AIN'T GOIN' *NOWHERE!*

IF *BLOOD* WANTS SOMEONE WATCHIN' HER EVERY MOVE...HE CAN DO IT HIMSELF!

I'D RATHER SPEND MY TIME COUNTIN' OUR *ASSETS!*

LORDY! LOOK AT IT ALL! DIDJA EVER DREAM SO MUCH WEALTH EXISTED?

LOTTA GOOD IT DOES US! FIRST OF ALL...IT'S WORTHLESS! AND SECONDLY...IT BELONGS TO BLOOD! HE'S THE ONE WHO FOUND IT IN THIS OLD CITY TREASURY!

AND HE'S THE ONE HOARDIN' IT UNTIL THE DAY IT BECOMES WORTH SOMETHING!

FOR ALL IT MEANS TO US, IT MIGHT AS WELL BE A DEHYDRATED DUNG HEAP!

SOMEDAY... WHEN THE WORLD GETS BACK TOGETHER...

...I'M GONNA TAKE ALL THIS AWAY FROM THAT WORM! HA! HA! HA! HA!

YOU SHOULD LIVE SO LONG!

SAXON! WATCH OUT! THE LION-MUTE-!

BLOOD PUT IT THERE TO PROTECT HIS HOARD, REMEMBER-!?

AW, SCREW BLOOD!

YOU KEEP TAKIN' BATHS IN HIS GOLD, THAT DAMN THING'S GONNA EAT YOU SURE!

C'MON...! LET'S GET OUTTA HERE AN CHECK ON SWEETCAKES!

RIGHT THIS WAY, YA CHICKEN-BAGGIN' FAGGOTS! MY CHAINS ARE LOOSE AND WAITING FOR YOU!

JEEZUS, WOLFE...! SHE... SHE'S FREE!

MY, MY! AIN'T HE A SHARP ONE TODAY!

BOUNCE THIS OFF YER PEARLY WHITES, RUBBER BALLS!

URRK!

THWPPPT!

NOW YOU JUST LAY THERE LIKE A GOOD LITTLE GIRL WHILE I SMEAR OL' JIZZUM LIPS HERE ALL OVER THE WALLS!

WAY I SEE IT, SPURT BAG... DOGS SHOULD BE CHAINED BEFORE BEIN' WHIPPED!

AGHHH!

THWAP!

OOMPH!

SEE! I DIDN'T KEEP YOU WAITIN' LONG NOW, DID I!?

NOW IF I CAN ONLY GET *OUT* OF HERE WITHOUT RUNNING INTO THAT LIMP-WAD, *BLOOD!*

UH OH! SPEAK OF THE VERMIN-!

YOU'RE NOT *LEAVING* US, ARE YOU, BABYCAKES?

'PEARS TO *ME* YOU'RE THE ONE'S TAKIN' THE *TRIP*, NUMB NUTS!

AS THE SAYIN' GOES... WATCHOUT FOR THAT *FIRST STEP!*

I SWEAR... THEY JUST AIN'T MAKING SKULLS THE WAY THEY *USED* TO!

NOW... WHICH WAY *OUT* OF--! HEY!! WHAT'S *THIS?*

WELL I'LL BE--! IT'S THE *TREASURE ROOM* I CAME HERE TO FIND... JUST FILLED TO THE BRIM WITH USELESS *WEALTH!*

WHAT THE COMMUNE COULDN'T DO WITH *THIS*... IN ANOTHER THIRTY OR FORTY YEARS...!

THAT'S THE VAULTS *DOWN THERE*, LOVE! BUT I DON'T SEE A *SOUL!*

THEY'RE DOWN THERE I *KNOW* IT!

AND I'M GONNA *FRY* ME UP A BATCH OF KIDNAPPIN' WORM-EATERS WITH THIS VAPORIZER!

LET'S SEE YA DODGE *THIS*, YA MOTHER GRABBIN' SYCOPHANTS!

BDWAM!

OWW!

HEY, YOU BIG GALOOTS! WHATTAYA TRYIN' T' *DO*... *COOK ME?*

THAT ONE *WAS CLOSE!*

HADRIAN! *LOOK!* IT'S *ANGEL!*

SHE'S *SAFE!*

WE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN! IF THEY HAD ANYTHING *LESS* THAN AN *ARMY*... THERE'S NO WAY THEY COULD HAVE *HELD* HER!

WHAT *TOOK* YA SO LONG, SHORT HAIRS?

THE WAR'S BEEN OVER FOR AN *HOUR*... AND HAVE I GOT A SURPRISE FOR *YOU!*

DON'T *TELL* ME... YOU'VE FOUND A *PET* FOR THE NUNS!

NO, SILLY! HE'S JUST A BIG LOVEABLE *TEDDY BEAR* I MET DOWN IN THE VAULTS! HE'S SIMPLY *CRYING OUT* FOR *AFFECTION!*

YOUR GIFT IS THE MOST FABULOUS CACHE OF *GOLD, JEWELS* AND DECADENT *WEALTH* YOU'VE EVER SET EYES ON!

AND EVEN IF IT'S WORTH NOTHING *NOW...!* WHY IN ANOTHER *HALF CENTURY* OR SO...WHO *KNOWS!?*

WE MIGHT EVEN BE ABLE TO AFFORD *SILK STOCKINGS* FOR THE SISTERS... *REAL* JOCKEY SHORTS FOR OUR PRIESTS..AND MAY-BE...JUST MAYBE THERE'LL BE ENOUGH LEFT OVER TO BUY THAT *LASER* CANNON WE'VE ALWAYS WANTED!

ANGEL... I JUST DON'T *KNOW* ABOUT YOU! YOU RISK YOUR LIFE FOR WORTHLESS *TREASURES*... YOUR VOCABULARY WOULD MAKE A BROOKLYN SAILOR *BLUSH*... AND YOUR *DRESS*--!

LORD! I'VE SEEN MORE CLOTHING IN A NUDIST CAMP!

YES, ISN'T IT, *GRAND*, FATHER!?

AND TO THINK I OWE IT ALL TO MY *UPBRINGING*--!

WHY, IF NOT FOR THE BOTH OF *YOU*...WHO KNOWS *HOW* I WOULD HAVE TURNED OUT! *HA! HA! HA!*

NEXT ISSUE: MORE EXCITING ADVENTURES WITH THE ANGEL!

MOMMA, CAN YOU HEAR ME?



Author: NICOLA CUTI/Illustrator: ALEX NINO

WHAT'S THE MATTER, LOVER? MY *TIN FACE* BOTHER YOU? DOES IT MAKE YOUR *STOMACH* SHRIVEL? YOUR *SKIN* CRAWL?

MY RIGHT *LEG'S* MECHANICAL TOO! AND WAIT'LL YOU SEE MY *SAUSAGE!*

LOOK, MISTER, I DIDN'T MEAN NO OFFENCE.

I WASN'T *ALWAYS* LIKE THIS. WHEN I WAS YOUNG... I WAS A *WHOLE* MAN!

OH *GOD!* HERE IT *COMES.* THE STORY OF HIS LIFE!

MY FATHER WAS KILLED ONE NIGHT WHEN HE GOT DRUNK AND DECIDED TO TAKE A SUN BATH IN AN *ATOMIC FURNACE.* THEY SAID HE WAS SO RADIOACTIVE THEY USED HIS CHARRED BODY TO POWER A BRICK-MAKING FACTORY FOR TEN YEARS.

BECAUSE MY MOTHER WAS POOR, SHE SOLD ME TO THE KAGOOLIANS AS A *SLAVE.*

I KNOW THIS IS A BAD TIME TO TELL YOU, COLE... BUT YOU'RE *ADOPTED.* YOUR REAL MOTHER'S NAME IS *MAISY!*

DOES THAT MEAN YOU WON'T BE COMING *BACK* FOR ME?

WHILE DIGGING IN THE MINES, I BEGAN TO *FANTASIZE* ABOUT MY REAL MOTHER. SOMETIMES I IMAGINED SHE WAS A *GYPSY QUEEN.* OTHER TIMES I THOUGHT OF HER AS THE FERTILITY GODDESS OF A SMALL PLANET.

I WORKED IN THE KAGOOLIAN SULPHUR MINES FOR *TEN YEARS* AFTER THAT! A FEMALE KAGOOLIAN... THE WIFE OF A MINE INSPECTOR, WAS MY TICKET *OUT!* SHE TOOK *PITY* ON ME, AND BOUGHT ME AS HER PERSONAL *PET!*

RANGU... CAN'T I HAVE *THAT* ONE?

OH, *ALRIGHT!* BUT IF HE MESSES UP THE FURNITURE, *BACK* HE GOES!

I MUST NEVER FORGET MY MOTHER'S NAME. *MAISY.* SOMEDAY I'LL *FIND* HER!

RANGU WANTED ME TO HAVE YOU *FIXED!* BUT THAT'S NOT NECESSARY... *IS* IT?

FOR A *COLD-BLOODED BLOB* SHE'S NOT HALF BAD. I DIG THOSE TITS.

I WONDER IF HE STILL *RESPECTS* ME?

I WAS HIGHLY GRATEFUL FOR MY MISTRESS'S KINDNESS UNTIL I DISCOVERED THE *REAL* MOTIVE BEHIND HER ACTIONS!

OUR AFFAIR WENT ON FOR A LITTLE OVER A *YEAR.* THEN ONE DAY... HER HUSBAND *CAUGHT* US!

RANGU! HOW DID YOU *KNOW?*

I CALLED THE *VET* WHEN I WAS NEVER BILLED FOR HIS *OPERATION!*

YOU'VE BOTH DECEIVED ME, *GORINA!* I'M GOING TO HAVE ONE OF YOUR *TAILS* CUT OFF! AS FOR YOUR *PET*...

OFF WITH HIS *BAJONG!*

TH... THEN IT'S *TRUE! THAT'S* ARTIFICIAL TOO! *WILLIKERS!*

IT *WOULD* HAVE BEEN! BUT KAGOOLIAN *REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS* ARE IN THE APPROXIMATE VICINITY OF OUR *LEFT HAND!* RANGU ASSUMED HUMANS WERE ARRANGED THE SAMEWAY.

THEN... THEN HOW *DID* YOU LOSE IT?

'I WAS TOSSED OUT OF RANGU'S HOUSE AND WENT BACK TO WORK IN THE *MINES...!'*

BUT BY THAT TIME, I'D HAD MY *FILL* OF THOSE STINKING *HELL* HOLES! I WANTED *MY MOTHER!*

THIS'S FOR *YOU,* YA REPTILLIAN *SLIMEBALL!*

IF I MAKE IT TO THE SWAMP, I'VE GOT A FIFTY-FIFTY CHANCE! OUT IN THE OPEN I'VE HAD IT!

ZOW! BZZZZT! TZOOOIE!

ZORTON!

ALI AKBA KAHN... ZORTON!

K-JWG! P-TANG!

FREEDOM! IT'S RIGHT ACROSS THAT RIVER!

ZZZZZT!

BLAST HIM!

KILL TH' BASTARD!

THERE HE GOES NOW! THE EUNUCH!

BLOW 'M AWAY!

ZORTON? NEVER HEARD THAT WORD BEFORE! MUST BE A KAGOOLIAN CURSE.

ZORTON! ZORTON!

HMMM...! ZORTON! THAT'S WHAT THE SIGN SAYS. WEIRD.

COME T' FIND OUT... A ZORTON WAS THE KAGOOLIAN EQUIVALENT OF THE LOCH NESS MONSTER!

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR FACE!

CAN'T WE FIRST...? OH, ALRIGHT!

NOW WHAT THE BLUE-BALLED HELL IS A ZORTON?

I HAD MYSELF FITTED WITH *MECHANICAL PARTS*, AND CONTINUED MY SEARCH FOR *MOM!*

THREE HUNDRED ON THE *RED.*

SORRY! YOU'RE OVER HOUSE LIMITS, SIR.

I MADE THE MISTAKE, HOWEVER OF STOPPING AT THE CASINO WORLD *VEGAS II*, FOR A LITTLE RELAXATION...

THE UGLIEST CREATURE I'VE EVER SEEN AMBLED OVER TO THE TABLE AND *NODDED* TO THE DEALER.

PLACE THE GENTLEMAN'S *BET*, JERRY.

WHATEVER YOU SAY, *BOSSMAN!*

RED IS THE WINNER.

AGAIN!

THAT'S QUITE A *TIDY* SUM OF *LOOT* YOU HAVE THERE, FRIEND.

ABOUT *EIGHT MIL*, I'D SAY! I'M GOING TO BUY A TICKET TO *NEW SHANGHAI* AND SEARCH FOR MY *MOTHER.*

AW, DID *SONNY* LOSE HIS *MOMMY? HA! HA! HA! HA!*

GET *THAT!* A MOMMA'S BOY! *OH! HO! HO! HE! HOO! HOO! HOO!*

QUIET, YOU FOOLS!

SO YOU'RE LOOKING FOR *MOM*, HUH, SON...! THAT'S QUITE A *NOBLE GESTURE!* IT TRULY *TOUCHES* MY LARCENOUS HEART.

HOW *KIND* OF YOU, MR. BOSSMAN!

IF YOU WOULD NOT OBJECT, I'D LIKE TO HAVE A *GIFT* SENT TO YOUR ROOM.

THANKS FOR THE *WARNING!*

BE WARY OF *THIEVES*, MY FRIEND. THE PLANET IS *INFESTED* WITH THEM.

MY *CAR* WAS WAITING NEARBY, BUT *SOMEONE* WAS THERE... *READY* FOR ME!

I'LL TAKE THE *SATCHEL*, PIGMEAT!

THAT'S GOING TO BE *DIFFICULT* WITH A *HOLE* BURNED THROUGH YOUR ASS!

YAGH!

ZZZZZ

THOSE LIGHTS—! A CAR'S ABOUT T' RUN ME DOWN!

UNLESS I PUT MY OWN VEHICLE ON AUTOMATIC...

...AND GET HIM FIRST!

THERE!

ZROOOOM!

BA TOOOOOOM!

JEEZUS! WHAT A COLLISION!

IF ONLY I CAN MAKE IT TO MY ROOM WITHOUT BEING CHAR-BROILED.

NO DOUBT ABOUT IT... SOMEONE'S OUT TO FRY MY SWEET MEAT!

HOLD IT, YOU. STOP!

I TOLD YOU TO... AUGH.

NO, YOU DON'T, POPCORN!

HEY! I KNOW THAT GUY! IT'S JERRY, THE DEALER FROM BOSSMAN'S PLACE.

BOSSMAN IS BEHIND ALL THIS!

I TOOK THE LONG WAY, IN AN EVASIVE PATTERN TO THROW OFF FOLLOWERS. IT WAS NEARLY AN HOUR BEFORE I MADE IT BACK TO MY ROOM.

STEEL, YOU ARE DUMB! BOSSMAN SAID HE'D HAVE A GIFT WAITING FOR YOU... I LIKE MAYBE... A BOMB!

I'LL JUST SLIP OUT THE REAR EXIT...!

COLE! DON'T! THEY'RE WAITING FOR YOU OUT THERE! GO TO YOUR ROOM AND LET MY MEN TAKE CARE OF THEM!

YOUR MEN ALMOST TOOK CARE OF ME... THREE TIMES! TO THINK YOU SOUNDED SO SINCERE BACK IN THE CASINO, BOSSMAN!

I WAS, COLE. IF THEY WERE MY MEN THEY WEREN'T ACTING UNDER MY ORDERS. TRUST ME! I LIKE YOU!

TRUST YOU? LIKE HELL I W---!

BZZZZT!

COLE!

I... AIN'T... NEVER GONNA SEE... HER... NOW. NEVER!

DON'T WORRY, KID. I'LL GET YOU FIXED UP. I... I SWEAR!

WAS IT WORTH IT, STEEL? YOU LOST HALF YOUR BODY... JUST TO SEE A WOMAN YOU DON'T EVEN REMEMBER!

YEAH! AND I KNOW SHE'LL HATE ME... BE REPULSED BY ME! WHEN WE FINALLY DO MEET.

BUT I'LL MAKE HER LOVE ME! I KNOW I CAN!

I... CAN *TELL* YOU WHERE *MAISY* IS, STEEL! I... I WANT YOU TO GO TO HER... JUST SO YOU'LL STOP *SEARCHING!*

YOU... YOU KNOW? *TELL ME!* WHERE CAN I *FIND* HER?

SHE SAID I'D FIND MAISY *HERE!*

THIS... *THIS* IS THE PLACE!? *SHIT!* AFTER ALL THIS TIME... I CAN HARDLY *BELIEVE IT!*

YOU WANNA SEE *MAISY?* WHAT FOR?

FOR TWENTY YEARS, MILLIONS OF MILES! AND THE LOSS OF *BODY* AND *SOUL!*

I WANT TO SEE HER NOW!

ALRIGHT! ALRIGHT! KEEP *COOL*, HOTSHOT!

THAT'S MAISY!

HER NAME STANDS FOR *MACHINE* FOR *ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION* OF *SCREAMIN' YOUNGUNS!*

MOM?

AS I SCANNED THE GREAT IMPERSONAL MACHINE, I HAD TO LAUGH AT THE COSMIC *JOKE* THAT HAD BEEN PLAYED ON ME. A *GAG* ON ALL OF MY EMBRYONIC BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

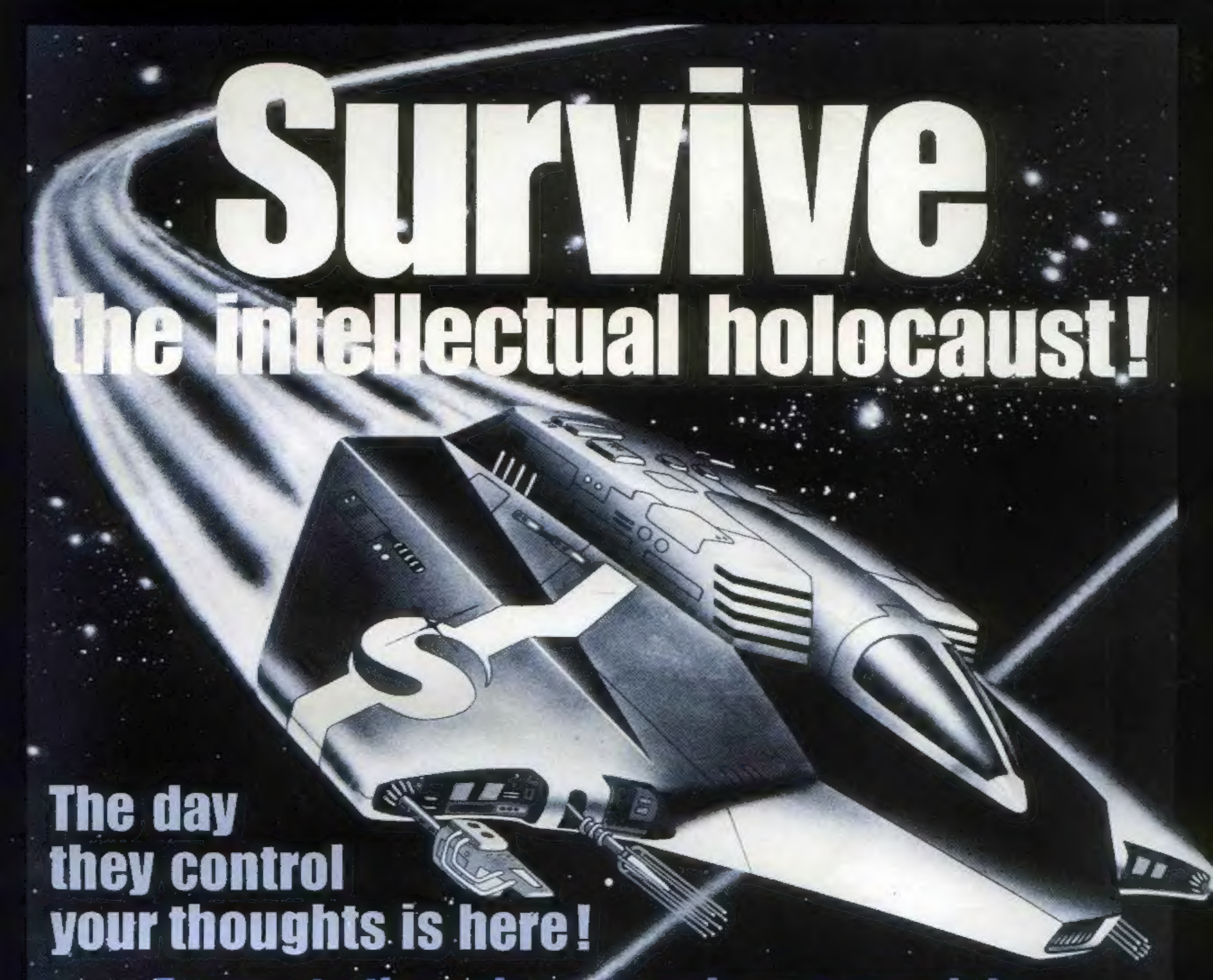
I RECALLED HOW I ONCE HEARD ABOUT A STUFFED DOLL BEING SUBSTITUTED FOR A MONKEY'S *MOTHER!* THE INNOCENT CHIMP CUDDLED UP WITH IT AS IF IT HAD BEEN HIS *TRUE* MOTHER. HOW MUCH HE *NEEDED* A MOTHER'S LOVE.

IN A WAY, SCIENCE, TOO, HAD MADE A *MONKEY OF ME!*

ARE YOU *SORRY*, STEEL?

JUST *HALF* OF ME, DORA.

THE *HUMAN* HALF.



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